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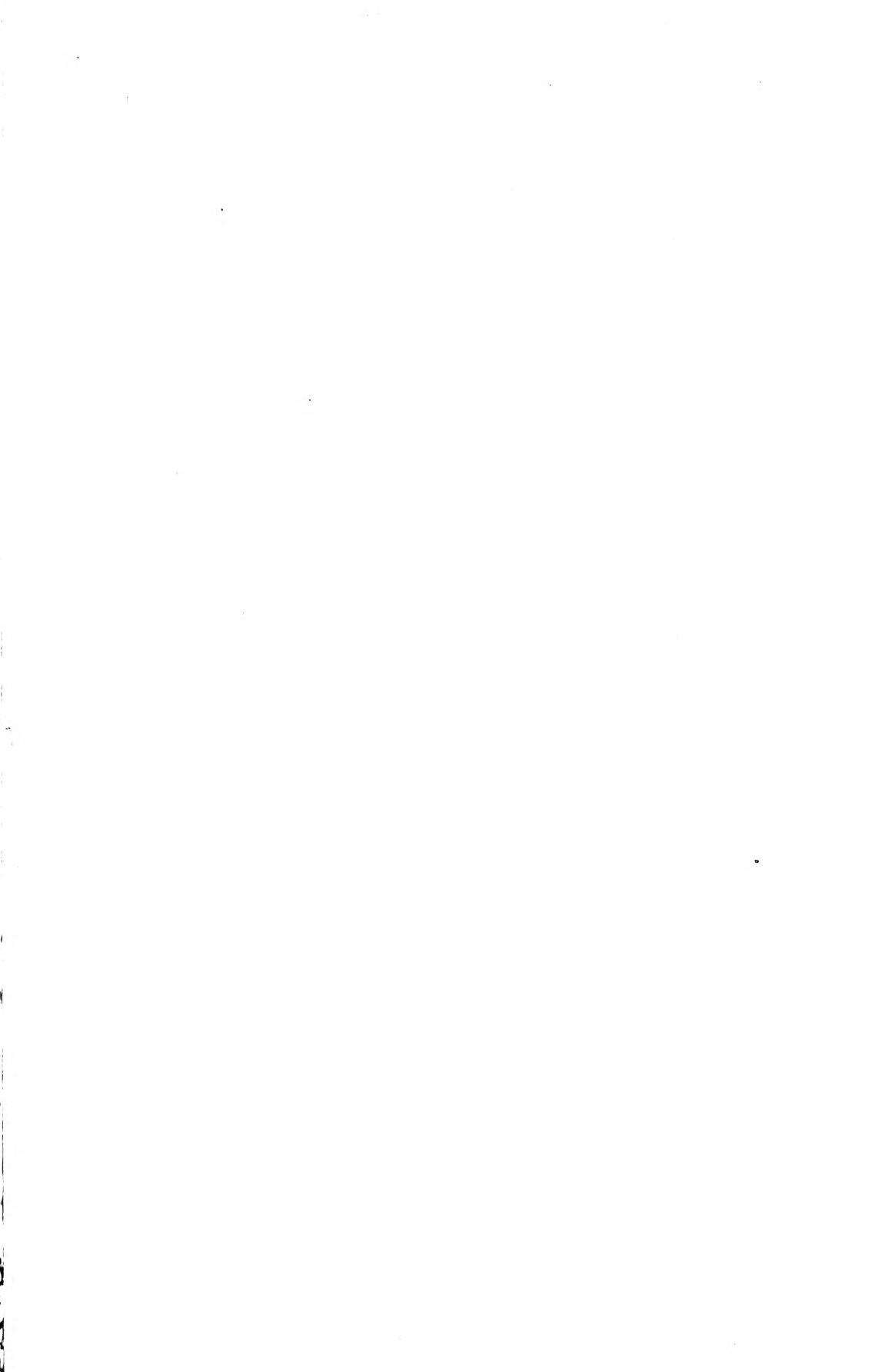


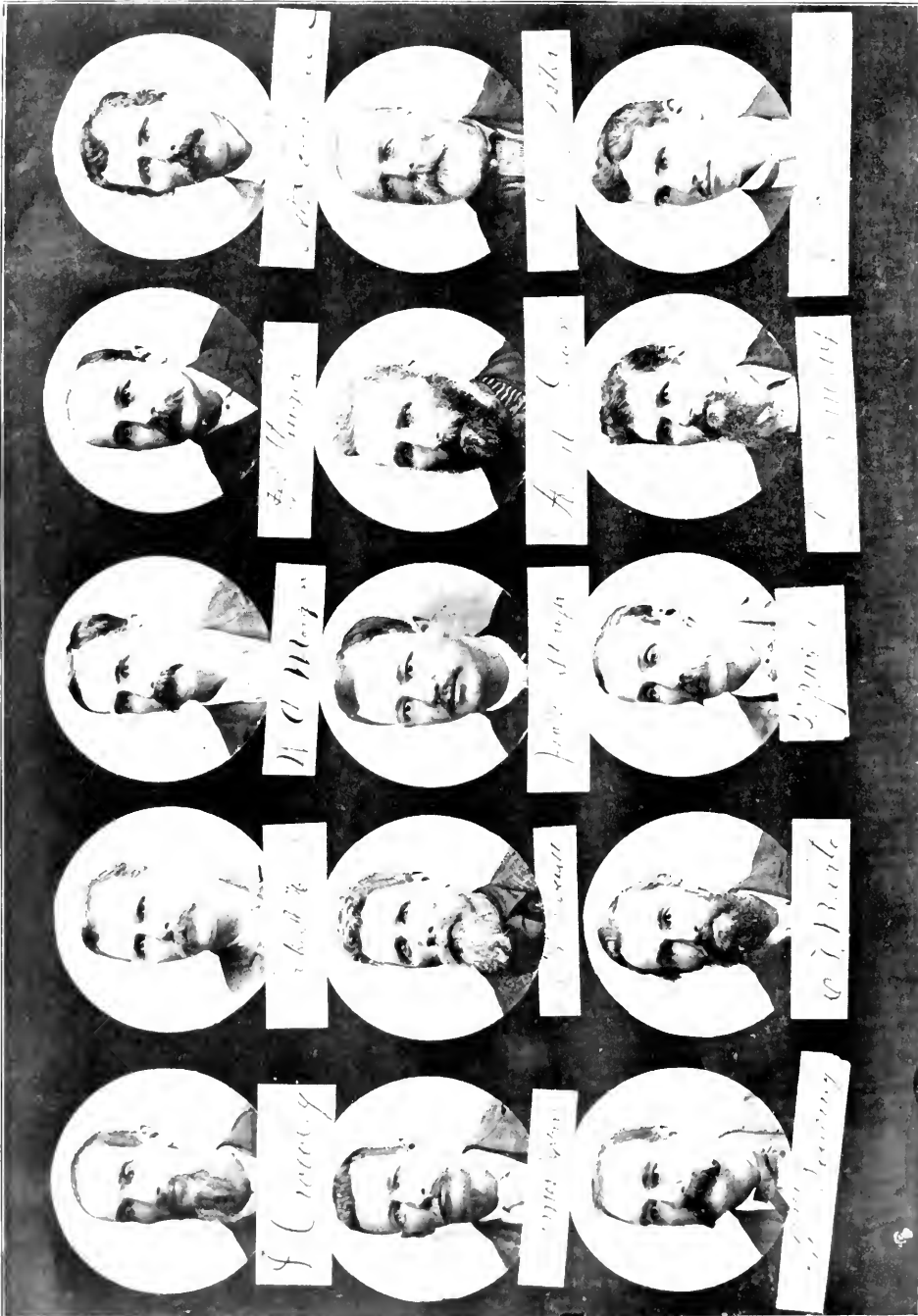












BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF 1895.

(See names in index.)

HISTORY  
— OF —  
DIXON COUNTY,  
NEBRASKA.

ITS PIONEERS, SETTLEMENT, GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT, AND  
ITS PRESENT CONDITION — ITS VILLAGES, TOWNSHIPS,  
ENTERPRISES AND LEADING CITIZENS,

TOGETHER WITH PORTRAITS AND BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF  
SOME OF ITS PROMINENT MEN, INCIDENTS  
OF PIONEER LIFE, ETC.

— BY —  
WILLIAM HUSE,

PONCA, NEBRASKA.

1896:  
Press of THE DAILY NEWS,  
NORFOLK.





## PREFATORY.

The following book of the county's history, early incidents, legends, stories, etc., hopes to meet with approval. That there are some errors, there can be no doubt, but the bulk is as correct as the memories of old settlers will permit.

The book is much larger than it was expected to be. The material on hand would have made a thousand pages, and hence to bring the size within reasonable bounds, it was necessary to abridge and cut down whenever it could be done. Especially so in our notices of the citizens of the county, which we have been compelled to shorten to one-fourth the length we had intended.

We have been greatly helped in the history of old times by the valuable memories of C. F. Putnam, A. Davis, S. B. Stough, N. S. Porter, Dr. Porter, L. T. Hill, and other pioneers, such memories being about the only sources of information to consult on such matters. For matters pertaining to the several townships and their present residents, we are greatly indebted to the friendly assistance of the citizens and especially the supervisors of such townships. Without such aid it would have been impossible to have given the many brief notices of citizens, and it is likely that even with all such assistance, some mistakes and omissions have occurred, especially in the south half of the county. To Wm. Wheeler, P. Kerwin, T. Hoy, W. Jenkins, J. Martin, A. D. Morgan and Geo. Herrick, we are also under great obligations for information in relation to the several villages of the county.

Without further words we will now introduce it to readers.





TEACHERS AT THE DIXON COUNTY INSTITUTE, AUGUST, 1893.



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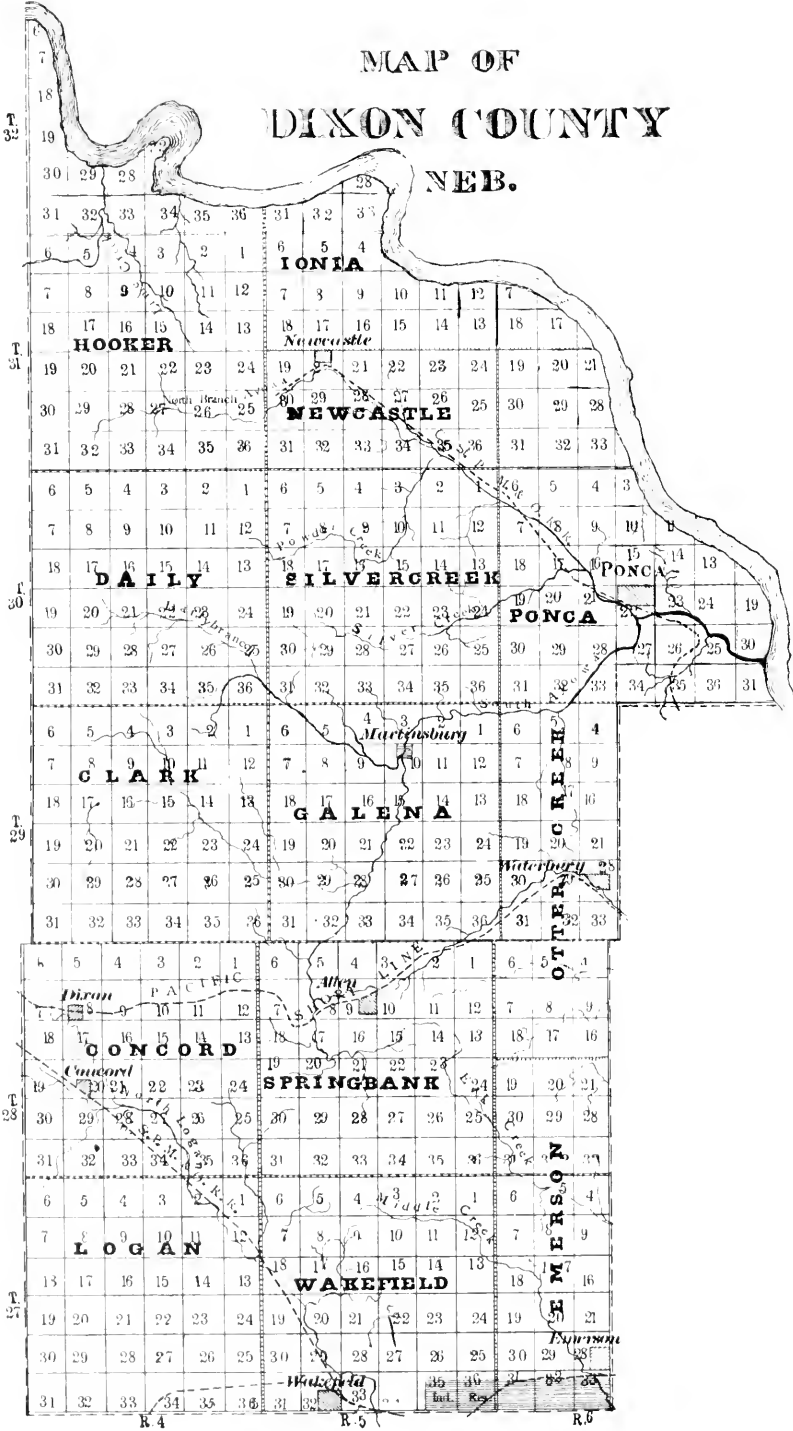
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# MAP OF DIXON COUNTY NEB.



# HISTORY

OF

## DIXON COUNTY, NEBRASKA.

### PART FIRST.

#### CHAPTER I.

##### INTRODUCTORY — BRIEF PRELIMINARY SURVEY OF FRONTIER LIFE IN NORTHEAST NEBRASKA THIRTY-FIVE TO FORTY YEARS AGO.

The rich land, pure water and healthy climate of Nebraska, together with its rapidly growing cities and towns, its railroads, markets, schools, churches and innumerable enterprises and improvements, present a wonderful contrast to its condition thirty-five to forty years ago. In many respects it is now regarded one of the best states in the union, but at that time it was hardly known. Then it was generally believed that Nebraska (and especially that part of it where Dixon county is,) was chiefly a desert, with little good land, having an atmosphere laden with malaria, without timber, and with water abominable to the taste and smell. Those who desired to make a home in this part of the west, were liable to be discouraged when they looked at the map and saw "Great American Desert" written across it, and especially when they listened to tales which asserted that in Nebraska the face of the country was a succession of sand hills, that its few white inhabitants were hardly superior to savages, and that an existence here would be unhappy and useless.

Prior to 1850, Nebraska was principally inhabited by Indians. The dusky tribes who made Dixon county their

stamping ground the Omahas, Poncas, Sioux, etc., were generally not the kind of noble red men immortalized by Cooper. They hunted, fished and stole ponies, and occasionally when a trader came and supplied them, they drank fire-water and fought with one another. The numerous Indian graves on the bluffs along the Missouri are about the only mementoes we now have of our copper colored predecessors.

It will be seen that the pioneers who first braved the perils of frontier life in Dixon county had no easy lot for awhile, nor were the times considered any too safe in the presence of the Indians, who deemed this their especial country and regarded the whites with aversion. In view of this unpleasant fact, settlers often had to follow the New England custom of two hundred years ago, and go about their work, guns in hand, and with eyes and ears ever open.

Most of those who ventured into this country, thirty to thirty-nine years ago, were poor in cash, but they usually had what was better, viz: a good supply of practical sense, and plenty of energy and perseverance. Some began life here as farmers, others hung out their shingles and announced themselves as blacksmiths, carpenters, lawyers, doctors or land agents. In all the trades and professions to which they applied themselves, grit and good judgment usually conducted them to the top. One might commence anything if he only had brains and assurance enough, and apparently with flattering prospects of success, whether keeping cattle, raising corn and potatoes, selling farms and town lots or scalping Indians, and finally, if he could in the meanwhile keep out of the penitentiary, he might expect to go to the legislature or to congress. All were ambitious to succeed, and concerning state and county affairs every man was a politician.

In 1859, the Pike's Peak fever carried away a large number of inhabitants, and in 1862 the Indian troubles drove away many more. Afterwards, for several years, improvements were slow. Those who remained in spite of the hard times which stuck to them like a brother, saw the tide finally turn, and to-day have no cause for regret. Of those first settlers now living, who had the grit to stay and see the dark side of life during the first few years of this country, there are few who are not in prosperous circumstances.

Prior to the time Nebraska became a state, Dixon county



was exceedingly slow moving. With no railroads and few markets, and with poor postal facilities and little news of what was going on in the world, life here was peculiarly humdrum. Among the few exciting occasions on the frontier were the raisings, when the settlers met and helped up a house or barn of logs or sod, and generally wound up the propitious event with a royal time of joy. Again, excitement brewed and bubbled up when an election took place. Then the citizens in determined and friendly contest, showed the merits or demerits of the respective candidates, argued the pros and cons, made the air vibrate with eloquence, and carried the day one way or the other with as much fervor as though the fate of Rome was to be decided.

In those primitive days, official business was not as heavy as it is now, and state and county officers had little excepting their official dignity to sustain them. Not as now were counties compelled to build offices for their clerks, treasurers, judges and sheriffs, nor was much room required for records, nor iron safes for a county's money. Then, county officials were not troubled to find office room. An empty cracker box or nail keg was deemed good enough for papers of minor importance; valuable records, however, were more carefully protected, and clerks and treasurers for safety and convenience usually carried them around in their hats. And in that age of Arcadian simplicity, he who, in obedience to the voice of his fellow citizens, donned the judicial ermine, administered justice in a manner as patriarchal as was practiced in the days of Abraham. A stump or a surveyor's quarter section mound often became the seat of justice, and a much thumbed book of Ohio or Pennsylvania forms, the only legal compass to guide the decisions from the bench. Law suits were often settled by the court and constable giving off their costs, and in extreme cases the bystanders would chip in and make up the amount in dispute.

The most violent disturbances of public quiet took place at the time of county seat contests. Then it was that embryo metropolitan cities, whose log houses and corner groceries could have been counted on the fingers, entered the lists, and like young, untamed colts, furiously competed and ran against each other for the coveted prize. Such elections were always close and amid great excitement. Very often

the official count showed more votes polled than there were white men, Indians, horses, buffaloes, coyotes and prairie dogs in the county. This habit of extensive voting never prevailed in any other kind of a contest, and in this was not confined to any one voting precinct, but was practiced equally and impartially at all of them. Hence, no serious harm could ensue. It increased the excitement and fun of the voters, and the result was generally the same as if no such extreme methods had been adopted.

Society showed some curious features during those primitive times. People came here from all parts of the east and south, and brought to the common stock, the habits, laws, customs, notions of religion and methods of business prevailing at their old homes. The bracing air and boundless prairies around them expanded their minds and hearts. If they brought with them littleness of soul, they were soon seen to be forgetting narrow and selfish views of life and developing generosity and nobility of character. As in all new and thinly settled countries, the people became acquainted and friendly, and their social and business intercourse, though sharp, was not often tinged with meanness. If a family was in distress, its neighbors gave relief if they could. They had probably been there themselves. Settlers might differ with each other on politics and perhaps feel justly sore over a land or horse trade, but if one were sick or hard up, his neighbors forgot past differences and became unselfish and generous.

A Nebraska man might wink at an attempt to steal a county seat, but he would strictly stand by his friends and insist on fair play for the community in which he lived, redress their wrongs with promptness and vigor, and if the courts were lax, as was often the case, he would not hesitate in extreme cases of wrong doing, to usurp the functions of the highest tribunals.

Such was frontier life during the infancy of Dixon County as well as elsewhere in Nebraska. Though the country was thinly settled and its wealth could excite neither vanity nor envy, the people, even with all their privations, had many grounds for contentment. Nearly every one had good health. Occasional good crops and profitable ventures sustained ambition. In this prolific atmosphere the often advent of heirs

increased the joy of households and helped to swell the census. No man or woman gave special heed to fashion books or to the cut of their garments. There were no bickerings, back-bitings or jealousies. All were equally rich and equally poor. As a consequence early settlers were, in the main, a harmonious brotherhood, and now are worthy of the remembrance and respect of those who follow them.

## CHAPTER II.

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE TERRITORY OF NEBRASKA — THE FIRST WHITE SETTLERS IN DIXON COUNTY AND THE RELINQUISHMENT OF INDIAN CLAIMS — NAMES, DATES OF ARRIVAL AND WHERE FROM, AS NEAR AS CAN BE ASCERTAINED OF PIONEERS FROM THE FIRST ARRIVAL IN MAY, 1856, TO THE TIME WHEN DIXON COUNTY WAS ORGANIZED IN THE FALL OF 1858.

In 1803, the country which is now the state of Nebraska, was a part of the province of Louisiana and under the dominion of France. In 1854, this country, (which during the interval between 1803 and 1854, had been ceded to the United States and had successively been part of the territories of Louisiana and Missouri,) was organized by an act of congress, as the territory of Nebraska. As thus organized, Nebraska territory was of vast dimensions, including not only the present state of Nebraska but also the great region to the north and west now occupied by the Dakotas, Wyoming and Montana.

Prior to the formation of Nebraska territory in 1854, as well as for two years afterwards, that part of it now known as Dixon County had never had a permanent white settler. (Indeed, white settlers in Nebraska were few and far between in those early times, there being in the whole territory in 1855 only about 3,500.) From time to time, people had passed through on their way to the far west, or had visited it to purchase furs of the Indians or for the perilous excitement of hunting and trapping on Indian lands. In 1847 and the following year several large companies of Mormons went across the country on their way to Salt Lake, and their various routes, the "Old Mormon Trails" as they are now called, hard and worn like turnpikes and devoid of grass, are in many places plain to be seen.

This country, then claimed by the Indians, was a region little known and its reputation as being a part of the "Great

American Desert" rendered it far from inviting to settlers. Soon after the territory was organized, the Omaha Indians ceded to the government a large part of their lands west of the Missouri amounting to about 485 square miles. This great tract embraced what is now known as Dakota county and extended up the river to Aoway Creek (now known as South Creek,) in Dixon County. West of that creek and between it and Fort Randall, the country was claimed by the Ponca Indians. Hence a pioneer could by virtue of the treaty with the Omahas, come in peace and safety up the country as far as the Aoway, but to cross that stream and go farther into the promised land laid him liable to incur the high displeasure of the Poncas. Such Indian title was often disputed by pioneers, who, looking across the Aoway and seeing beautiful valleys and plains beyond, longed to cross and in fact often did cross and braving opposition, occupy claims on the forbidden ground. This disputed region was as yet unsurveyed, and the uncertainty of title and the presence of the copper colored majority naturally unfriendly under the circumstances rendered the position of the venturesome pioneers anything but pleasant or secure. Fortunately this insecure and chaotic condition of things lasted but a couple of years, and when Dixon County was organized in 1858, all differences between the whites and the Ponca Indians had been happily settled by the latter ceding to the general government all claim to land west of the Aoway excepting a tract west of the Niobrara river, to which reservation they soon after removed.

Dakota county which was organized in 1855, (three years before Dixon County,) was bounded on the west by the line between ranges 5 and 6. Thus, as will be seen by reference to the map, Ponca and Ponca township as well as a strip running north and south and three miles wide, now embraced in Dixon County, was at the start a part of Dakota county.

The first white people who made homes in what afterwards became Dixon County, came in May, 1856, and an increasing tide of pioneers rapidly followed. The first settlements were at or near Ponca and from thence extended up South Creek and West Creek. In the main they came from the eastern states, and were hardy, resolute and industrious men, else they would not have come. They had their pick

of the lands and selected wisely. They were mostly poor but to their joy they found rich land and a genial climate. Here they built their homes, cultivated their lands and reared their families. It was a venture, thus entering a new and almost unknown country, but their faith was well founded and though the road to wealth has been long and not one of entire sunshine, yet as they now look back over it and see how the start was and how things are now, none can say they are not content.

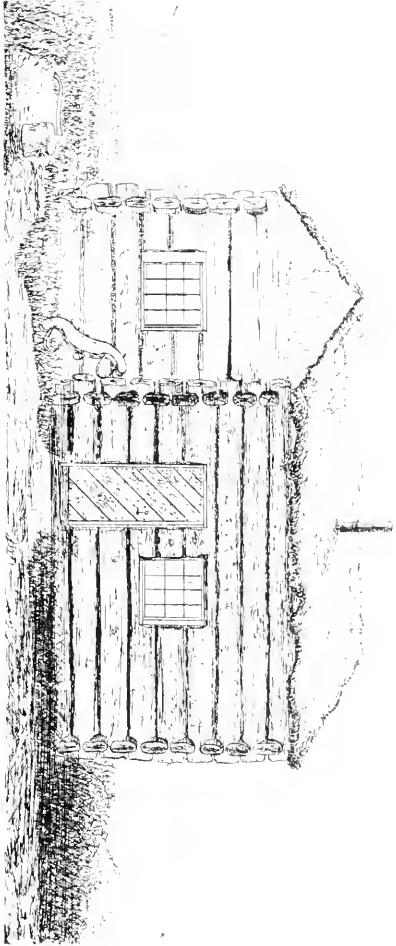
We have endeavored to obtain the names of all who came here from the first settlement to the time the county was organized and the first election of officers was held in the fall of 1858. Between May, 1856, and the year 1858, there was no organization, no surveys of land, nothing in fact but a sort of "squatter sovereignty," and the uncertainty of the future and the possibility of losing all the fruits of their industry, required the pioneers to be men of unbounded hope and perseverance. That they came and remained rendered them worthy of remembrance. Hence we have prepared a list of those pioneers, desiring not to omit a single one. Possibly there may be three or four omissions, but there cannot be more. To obtain this list of names, where they came from, when they came and where they located in the county, we have been compelled to rely on the memory of those old pioneers who now remain. The help especially of Messrs. S. B. Stough, C. F. Putnam, A. Davis, L. T. Hill and N. S. Porter, has been invaluable, and their excellent memories of pioneers and pioneer days, have enabled us to accomplish far more than we had at first expected.

The following is the list referred to. Immediately after the name of each pioneer will follow the name of the place he came from, the date of his arrival and where he located. In many instances, however, information has been scanty as to such dates, etc., and in some cases we have been able to give only the names:

EDWARD ARNOLD, Massachusetts, May 7, 1857. (Was father of the second child born in county, viz.: Wm. Arnold, Feb. 1, 1858.) First located west of M. Gorman's place between Ponca and Martinsburg. Was first clerk of county, elected in fall of 1858.

JAMES ALEXANDER, Iowa, December, '56.

FIRST HOUSE IN COUNTY, BUILT IN MAY, 1836, BY ADAM SMITH.







ROBERT ALEXANDER, Iowa, December, '56.

THOMAS ALEXANDER, Iowa, December, '56.

SAM ALEXANDER, Iowa, December, '56, went to Pike's Peak in '60. The Alexanders located on Powder Creek.

C. ANDREWS, Ohio, '57, located on Ionia bottom.

J. P. ALLISON, Ohio, '57, located in what is now Silver Creek Township, on the farm where C. F. Putnam lives.

J. W. BRAMBLE, Vermont, came in fall of '56, moved up his store from Logan in spring of '57.

S. P. BALTZLY, '57.

OLIVER BALTZLY, '57.

B. BEESON, Iowa, spring of '57, located in Ionia bottom.

WM. BIGLEY, SR., and his sons,

WM. BIGLEY, JR., and

JAMES BIGLEY, came from Pennsylvania in fall of '56, located near Ponca in South Creek valley, on farm now owned by the family.

PARKER B. BROWN, Massachusetts, August, '56, took claim on South Creek.

GEORGE BROWN, Massachusetts, August, '56, took claim on South Creek.

E. M. BISBEE, New York, spring of '58, Ponca.

JAMES BARRETT, New York, '58, Ponca.

CHARLES BUCKMAN, Pennsylvania, May, '56, vicinity of Ponca.

J. P. BURGMAN, '57.

M. B. BELLOWS, '58, settled near Lime Creek.

JOHN BUNTZ, Pennsylvania, May, '56, near Ponca.

JACOB BUNTZ, Pennsylvania, May, '56, near Ponca.

O. BOTTLESOX, '57.

E. BAKER, '56.

JAMES CLARK, Ohio, August, '56, located on West Creek.

GERHART CARSTINES, May, '56, near Ponca.

A. CURRY, from Philadelphia, Pa., came May 7, 1857, settled on South Creek, where Harry Filley now lives. In 1860 moved to his present location on West Creek, five miles west of Ponca.

JOHN CAVANAGH came from Holiioke, Mass., and arrived May 7, 1857, took claim near head of South Creek, as also did his son, Bernard Cavanagh, who came from the same place with him.

CARSON, Iowa, an uncle of "Kit" Carson. He came with Frank West in August, 1856, to lay out Ponca.

C. B. CUMMINGS, fall of '56, located near Dixon on Lime Creek and was one of the founders of that town.

LOUIS CASTNER, came down the Missouri from Fort Benton in spring of '57.

JOHN CARPENTER and his brother, New York, '57, settled at North Bend.

HUGH COMPTON, New York, '57, settled near North Bend.

L. CROSS, Vermont, '57, took claim near Ionia.

DOC CONKLING, Ohio, started saw mill at Dixon in 1857.

P. DAILEY, Massachusetts, spring of '57, first settler in Daily valley.

JACOB DUEL, New York, '57, settled near North Bend.

LEANDER DAVIS, New York, in spring of '58, first settled on West Creek, six miles west of Ponca. Same year moved to Ponca.

M. DELOUGHRY, Ohio, May 7, 1857, settled on South Creek.

DEMING, Pennsylvania, May 7, 1857, located on South Creek. Moved away in '58.

D. DONNELLY, '56, South Creek.

DANIEL DONLIN, June '56, located where his son, Wm. Donlin, now resides near Martinsburg. Said son was the first white child born in county, August 5, 1857.

P. DEMPSEY came from Girard, Erie county, Pa., '57, first located up South Creek. Afterwards removed to West Creek.

DEXTER, Ohio, a brother-in-law of F. Freeman, came in fall of '56. He was a partner of Whitcome in the first saw mill near Ponca.

DONAHUE took claim up South Creek in '57.

J. B. DENTON, New York, '57, near Ionia. Was first judge of county, elected in fall of 1858.

JOHN ERNST, Pennsylvania, '56, Ponca.

FRANCIS FREEMAN, Ohio, fall of '56, located at first on claim near river, afterwards removed to Ponca.

HENRY FORD, Pennsylvania, spring of '56.

NATHAN FELTER, Illinois, '57, Ponca.

WM. FISTER (OR PEISTER,) Pennsylvania, '57. The farm he located and lived on up to the time of his death is two miles southwest of New Castle.

FARWELL, Illinois, '58, Concord.

HENRY FORTH, spring of '56, took claim on creek east of Ponca.

ABE FORNEY, Illinois, spring of '57, located in South Creek.

HENRY A. FULLER, New York, fall of '56, was one of Ponca's town proprietors in company with Dr. Stough and Frank West. Fuller moved away in '63 and now resides in Omaha.

HARRY FILLEY.

MICHAEL GILLAN and his son, Wm. Gillan, came from Pennsylvania in November, '56. Wm. Gillan now lives on land near Martinsburg, then taken. Started from Pennsylvania day after election, when they voted for Buchanan.

MURTHA GORMAN, Pennsylvania, '56, South Creek, between Ponca and Martinsburg, and about five miles from Ponca.

PAT GREEN and his sons, Thomas Green and Pat Green, Jr., arrived May 7, 1857, from Taunton, Mass. They took a claim adjoining what was afterwards known as the "Winston place," three miles south of Ponca.

J. H. S. GROVE, Pennsylvania, '57, near Ponca.

J. GUILBERSON, '58, at Dixon.

HENRY HOESE,

FRANK HOESE and

WM. HOESE came in '56 from Pennsylvania. They built the first house in Ponca in fall of '56, near creek.

DAN HANNAFON, '56, located up South Creek. Was thought to be too free with neighbors' cattle. Left in two years to the joy of all.

PRESTON HOTCHKISS and

ELI HOTCHKISS, in '56 from Ohio, came with the Whitcomes, and Preston Hotchkiss had an interest in Whitecome's mill near Ponca.

R. M. HOTCHKISS, Iowa, spring '57, located in what is called Brookey's Bottom in northwestern part of county.

J. C. HARRINGTON, Massachusetts, '57, Ponca.

RICHARD HAGGIN, Iowa, '57, located near Dixon. Was the second sheriff of the county.

THOS. HALVERSON, Wisconsin, spring of '57, lived in Bigley's ravine.

L. HOUTEN, '57.

F. HARDER, New York, '58, village carpenter of Ponca.

JOHN HAGGIN, Iowa, '57, Dixon.

Z. HAGGIN, Iowa, '57, near Dixon.

O. F. HAGGIN, Iowa, '57, near Dixon.

FRANK JORDAN, New York, '58, located near Ponca; came with Leander Davis.

BILL JONES, in spring of '57; lived up South Creek way. The first (and last) buffalo ever killed in county was killed in fall of '57 by Jones and Forney. There were plenty of elk in those days, but buffalo meat was a rarity.

ISAAC KUGLER, Pennsylvania, came with first party of settlers in May, '56; located near Ponca.

ABRAHAM KNEISS, Iowa, '58; took claim near Bigley's ravine.

MARCELLUS LATHROP, in August, '56, from Massachusetts; located on West Creek, on land west of the Todd place, now owned by Roden.

LA FABRE, '57; located near New Castle.

ELI LOYD and

CYRUS LOYD, came in '56 from Pennsylvania and left in '57; Ponca.

J. W. LOGAN, '57; near Dixon.

JOHN MCKINLEY, came from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and arrived May 7, 1857; first located in South Creek valley, then removed to farm now owned by Sam. McKinley two miles west of A. Curry's place, and from there to farm where he now resides, adjoining Ponca on the west.

JOHN MALONE, '57.

WM. MALONE, '57, and

PETER MALONE, '56, from Hanging Rock, Ohio, and first located on Powder Creek, where Dan Curry now lives. John Malone was first treasurer of county, elected in fall of '58.

J. MURPHY, Massachusetts, '57; South Creek valley.

DANIEL MCKENNA, Pennsylvania, '56; took claim in South Creek valley.

ROBERT MCKENNA, Pennsylvania, '56.

MULHOLLAND, '56; near North Bend.

MICHAEL McCUE, '58; near Ponca.

JOHN MASSINGER, New York, '57.

JOHN MASCALL and

ZEB. MASCALL, located on Lime Creek in '56. John Mas-

call resided there until '94 and then removed to Vermillion, South Dakota.

MONS NELSON, '56; near North Bend.

E. NELSON, '58; North Bend.

JAMES O'CONNOR,

JOHN O'CONNOR and

ANDY O'CONNOR, from Massachusetts in '56. They first located on the extreme southern frontier of settlement in county, about two miles south of Cavanaghs. They afterwards moved to places between Ponca and New Castle.

CHARLES F. PUTNAM, Massachusetts, August 1, 1856, located near Ponca on West Creek. First sheriff of county, elected in fall of '58. Built first frame house in county in fall of '57 on the claim he took, section 8, township 30, range 6. J. G. Crowell now owns place.

N. S. PORTER, New York, June 27, 1858, located in Ponca.

PEWITT, '57, at North Bend.

J. J. PIERCE and his son

H. M. PIERCE, came from Davenport, Iowa, in the spring of '58, and located at Ionia.

H. PASCHALL, Pennsylvania, spring of '56. On creek east of Ponca.

JOHN ROBEN, fall of '56; located where he now lives, three miles west of Ponca on New Castle road.

E. RICKER, Vermont, '56; owned the Jeff Wilbur place near Ponca.

FRANK RICKER, Vermont, '56; Ponca.

R. ROGERS came from Pennsylvania to Dakota county in '56, and moved to Ponca in '57; was the village blacksmith.

JOHN RUSSELL, '58, near Dixon.

M. RUSSELL, '58, near Dixon.

ROBINSON, '58, North Bend.

JOHN STOUGH, Pennsylvania, November, '56, Ponca.

DR. S. B. STOUGH, from Pennsylvania, came August 13, 1856, Ponca.

JACOB STOUGH, Pennsylvania, October, '57, Ponca.

MAURICE SCOLLARD, and his nephews, viz:

JOHN SCOLLARD, and

PAT SCOLLARD, came from Pennsylvania in '56, located between Ponca and Martinsburg.

EDWARD SERRY, from Massachusetts, in '56, and moved

his family here in '57. Located on West Creek, a mile west of where Roden now lives. Place now owned by Rogosh.

PHILIP SHERMAN, Wisconsin, '57, Ponca. Stayed till '59 and went to Oregon.

HANS STINSON, Wisconsin, '57, near Ponca.

J. SOUTHERLAND, Illinois, '57, located at North Bend. Was the wealthiest settler in the country at that time.

ELIAS SHOOK, Iowa, '58, lived in Ponca.

YANKEE SMITH, New York, '57, between Ponca and New Castle.

JOHN SINGELTON, Ohio, summer of '57, was engineer of Conkling's mill at Dixon. Left in '59.

ICH. SHERMAN, Wisconsin, '57, Ponca.

JOHN SNYDER, Pennsylvania, spring of '56, took claim up South Creek.

ADAM SMITH, Pennsylvania, came in May '56, was with first party who entered county. Took the land now owned by Wm. O'Connor, (half a mile south of Ponca), who bought it of Smith in '64. Mr. Smith now resides in Missouri.

GUSTAVUS SMITH, brother-in-law of the Hoeses, came from Chicago in the spring of '57, took the claim now comprising part of New Castle village. He lived there until his death, July 27, 1880.

JOHN SADER, Pennsylvania, '57, located about a mile west of New Castle, between there and the Fister place. Smathers lives on the place now.

OWEN SWEENEY, Pennsylvania, spring of '57, located near the "Lone Tree" in the Daily valley.

J. STEFANNI, spring of '57, located on Ionia bottom.

C. W. TODD, Vermont, spring of '58, located on West Creek, two and a half miles west of Ponca.

W. TRIPP, located in '57 near Ionia.

F. VAZANNI, '57, near Dixon on Lime Creek.

FRANK WEST, Iowa, came in August, '56, laid out first twenty-four blocks of Ponca that fall. Was there part of the time for several years, now lives in Des Moines, Iowa.

MR. WHITECOMB and his two sons, Josiah Whitecomb and Frank Whitecomb, from Ohio, came in fall of '56, located on river bottom northeast of Ponca, where they put up the first steam mill in county.

WHITCOMB, cousin of Josiah and Frank Whitecomb, came at same time, located on adjoining land.

P. J. WINSTON, Pennsylvania, '57, South Creek.

E. P. WEBSTER, Massachusetts, '57, one and one-half miles west of Ponca.

J. P. WEBSTER, Massachusetts, '57, near Ponca.

EUGENE WILBUR, New York, '58, located in Ionia bottom.

A. WHITE, '57, Ionia bottom.

RICHARD ZACK, '57, near Dixon.

(Mention is made of Dixon and Concord. These are not the present villages of those names, but were in what is now Hooker Township.)

## CHAPTER III.

PARTICULARS AND EXPERIENCES OF FIRST SETTLEMENT OF COUNTY -- THE RAPID AND INCREASING TIDE OF PIONEERS -- THE BIRTH OF PONCA -- PAPER TOWNS AND THE TOWNSITE BUSINESS IN 1856 AND 1857 -- CONCORD, NORTH BEND, DIXON AND IONIA -- THE DESIRE FOR COUNTY ORGANIZATION -- ATTENDING ELECTION AT ST. JOHNS -- THE FIRST GRASSHOPPER RAID SEEN BY THE PIONEERS -- ORGANIZATION OF COUNTY AND LOCATION OF COUNTY SEAT -- FIRST ELECTION OF COUNTY OFFICERS.

As appears from the list in the foregoing chapter, a good sized crowd of settlers made homes, in 1856, 1857 and 1858, in the country which afterwards became Dixon County. The list contains about one hundred and fifty names, many of them heads of families, and represent not less than two hundred and fifty or three hundred persons.

It will be noticed by looking over the names and dates of settlement, that the first party of settlers arrived May 9, 1856, a little over thirty-nine years ago. They camped the first night on the south bank of Aoway Creek, and but a stone's throw from where Ponca now is.

They had a right to come that far under the treaty made the year before with the Omahas, but could not legally cross to the north side of the creek, as there the Ponca Indians still held sway. The party consisted of Adam Smith and wife, Henry Paschal, Henry Ford, Charles Buckman, Mrs. Buckman, John Buntz, Gerhart Carstines, Isaac Kugler and wife and John Snyder, most of whom were from Pennsylvania. They selected their lands near each other for mutual protection and company, Mr. Smith taking land which is now the farm of Wm. O'Connor half a mile south of Ponca, and the others making claims in his neighborhood up and down the creek, being careful, however, not to encroach on the adjacent hostile territory.

The above, whose names are especially mentioned because



they were the first in the county and who properly divided the title of "first settler" between them, were soon followed by others. For a few months not many cared to incur the hostility of the Poncas, and cross the Aoway. But as time went on, settlers became less fearful, and occasionally one would venture over the boundary and take possession of one hundred and sixty or three hundred and twenty acres, (generally the latter,) as near as could be guessed at, the lands not yet having been surveyed. For safety, the settlers, whether located on government or Indian land, organized a "squatters club," so called, which assumed to protect its members in their claims and to settle any disputes which might arise. The meetings of the squatters were held at the house of Adam Smith and for about two years were the only dispensers of law and order in the country. They ran things about as equitably and fairly as one could expect.

Crimes in those days were rare, and the fact that no courts, dilatory motions or rules of law could interfere between an offender and his deserved punishment, had a tendency to keep things straight. We venture to say that legislatures and courts of justice of the present day could with profit study the law making and law enforcing squatter government of our predecessors thirty-nine years ago.

From the first start in May, the rush of pioneers rapidly increased and soon became very great. Favorable reports of the country were sent back by the settlers to their old homes in the East and there incited the "Nebraska fever" to rage and grow. All now know how attractive this country is in the spring and summer. The grass covered and flower bedecked prairies, hills and valleys, the trees and vines, the Italian sky and genial sun, all these radiant beauties peculiar to this country and climate presented a picture strongly in contrast with what eastern people had been accustomed to see. Hence the desire became almost universal to come. Not all could come, indeed not many when compared with the whole, but all longed to see a country where dingy fogs and bottomless mud were unknown and where farms equaling those of the Mohawk valley could be had for the asking.

Prominent with the throng which came during the summer and fall of 1856, may be mentioned Dr. Stough, John Roden, James Clark, Marcellus Lathrop, George Brown, C.

F. Putnam, John Stough, Henry, Frank and William Hoes, the Malones, the Scollards, the Gormans, the Gillans, McKennas, O'Connors, etc. The attractive valleys of South Creek and West Creek soon began filling up, and in the choicest locations were seen the homes of settlers and fields coming under the dominion of the breaking plow.

In August, (1856), Frank West and Mr. Carson came up from Sioux City. Like those who came before them they saw the ominous sign which one Charley Rulo, a half breed, had put up on the bank of the Aoway, warning settlers not to cross under the penalty of being fired back by the Ponca Indians. Nevertheless, West kicked aside the threatening notice, and with Carson crossed the Rubicon to where Ponca City now is. In the October following, West platted the first twenty-four blocks of this place and named it Ponca, after the Indian tribe.

Frank West, who took so prominent a part in the starting of Ponca was quite a rustler in his way. He was the son of a banker at Des Moines, Iowa, and had unlimited nerve, plenty of money and a large number of friends. He had various townsite projects, one of which was Niobrara, and in that business was generally successful. He was an expert marksman and a great Indian fighter, and in the Niobrara country and south and east of there his name was a terror to the Pawnees and Poncas.

In 1856, the town site business was extensively followed, and in the hands of speculators like West was made very profitable. It did not much matter whether buildings were erected or anything else was done, except to survey out and number the lots and blocks, drive the stakes, give names to the streets and make and record the map. Then the proprietor would be in a position to sell his lots and gather in from credulous eastern people of wealth a golden harvest. The scheme generally resulted profitably to the lot sellers. A beautiful map of an alleged town, with pictures of churches, opera houses and elegant residences nicely shown on the margin, was attractive, and many were bitten by their anxiety to purchase lots, the price of which seemed to them dog cheap. As an instance, the town site of Curlew in Cedar county, Neb., was probably the most glaring and successful fraud of all the fifty or more townsites in the river counties

of Northern Nebraska. Curlew had ten thousand lots, and it never had a house then or since.

But though houseless, its fascinating map and pictures, demonstrating the tremendous growth and importance of the place, gave the lots a rapid sale in New York and other eastern cities. Its ten thousand lots brought to its proprietors not less than \$150,000. It was that sort of townsite speculation which generally prevailed in Nebraska, in 1856 and 1857. Whether Ponca was or was not started by Mr. West for purposes of speculation in the east, or with the object of making more than a paper town, cannot be told, but whatever the intent may have been at the first, the admirable location, the unfailing water power, the protecting hills and the presence of a vast body of valuable timber on one side and innumerable acres of rich land on the other, soon showed that this would, in earnestness and truth, become a real and permanent town.

In the spring of 1857 the balance of the town, comprising in all three hundred and twenty acres was platted by Messrs. Stough and Fuller. The land had not yet, however, been surveyed by government and not until after such survey were Stough and Fuller enabled to perfect their plat so as to make it harmonize with the lines of the government surveyor. Such completion of the map was made May 5, 1858, and the same was duly filed in Dakota county clerk's office, June 15th, of that year.

In the neighborhood of Ponca, other towns were also staked out in the fall of 1856. On the hills a short distance southeast of Ponca the rival cities of St. Paul and Addison were surveyed, and being on land south of the creek where the title was not disputed by the Indians, it was thought that one of them would take precedence as the coming town, instead of Ponca. But nothing more than the platting, was done in behalf of St. Paul or Addison and they both soon became settlers' farms.

During that fall also, a town was started near where Line Creek enters the Missouri river, in the northwestern part of the county, by Messrs. Muholland and Cummings, and by them given the name of Concord, and another embryo city, North Bend, was located a mile north of Concord, by Jacob Duel and two or three others. Afterwards, in 1858, North

Bend and Concord were each desirous of becoming the county seat of the new county, and their antagonism toward each other resulted in the platting of a paper town, Dixon, between them, thereby uniting the whole as one.

In 1856, also, parties living in Sioux City located Ionia town site, building no houses, however, nor doing anything to hold the claim. In 1858 Ionia came into the possession of L. T. Hill, in whose hands it had prosperous growth for several years, but in 1878 the Missouri changed its channel and raided the town, and the ground on which it stood was washed away, together with its improvements and hopes for greatness. Accounts of those early towns, Concord, North Bend, Dixon and Ionia will be more fully given elsewhere.

As to Ponca, it did not at first grow very rapidly, and it remained a town only on paper until late in the fall of 1856, when Messrs. Henry, Frank and William Hoese built the first house. It was a comfortable log building one story high and was located near the creek. No farther advance was made until the next year. The country was growing faster than the town, a condition of things always taken as a healthy sign.

In December, "Old Man Whitcomb," as he was called, his sons and a partner (Dexter) and two assistants (Preston and Hotchkiss) came from Ohio and brought with them a steam saw mill which they located on the Missouri river bottom, a mile below Ponca landing. This, the first mill in this part of the country, suggested the possibility in the near future of houses of boards instead of logs, and hence was deemed an establishment of much importance to the settlers. Whitcomb's mill did a prosperous business for several years and eventually a small run of burs was added to it for grinding corn, so that the laborious task of grinding out a grist in a coffee mill which had been the general custom, became a thing of the past.

In the spring of 1857 the second house in Ponca was put up by Stough brothers and the third by H. A. Fuller and John Cavanagh. In June a store building, (a pretentious, one story structure, 16 by 40 feet), was erected by Mr. Bramble, and soon after a house and shop by Mr. Rogers, the village blacksmith. All were built of logs, and in fact log houses were all they had in the county until the fall of 1857,

when C. F. Putnam built a frame house on his farm. The first frame building in Ponca was commenced in 1858 by Mr. Whitecomb, and finished in 1859. It was designed for a hotel and was quite large, and its two tall stories loomed up with metropolitan dignity. No one ever occupied it any great length of time, although people stopped there temporarily for want of better quarters, and during a few weeks in 1859 Preston Hotchkiss used it as a hotel. Its emptiness except on special occasions and its general creaky and rattle-trap condition gave it the name of the "Old Air Castle." Despite its name, however, the "Air Castle" was quite a useful building during its existence. Here were held religious and political meetings, elections, debating societies, probate courts, Indian shows and public gatherings of all kinds. But in the course of time the building without care or repairs went into decline, and during the winter of 1862, when the soldiers stored in it a few loads of corn, its floor fell down and collapse and chaos ended its career.

In 1857 and 1858 the circle of settlement continued to widen and extend. Of those arriving up to the close of 1858 it has been very difficult and many instances impossible to obtain full particulars. Among the few who now reside in the county are Dr. S. B. Stough, John Stough, Jacob Stough, John McKinley and N. S. Porter, of Ponca city; P. Dempsey, of Silver Creek township; C. F. Putnam, of Ponca township; John Roden, Bernard Cavanagh, John Maskall, Alexander Curry and John Malone. These comprise nearly all who remain out of the one hundred and fifty who came in those first three years. During the long interval between then and now, death has removed many from the country which their enterprise helped to subdue. Among them are Judge Arnold, John Cavanagh, William and James Bigley and their father, P. J. Winston, E. M. Bisbee, Francis Freeman, Edward Serry, James and Robert Alexander, Gustavus Smith, the founder of New Castle; Michael Gillan, Murtha Gorman, Maurice Scollard, William Pfister, John Sader and P. Dailey. There are of course many others. Some of the early settlers, after remaining a few years, moved away and are spending useful lives in other places. Of the more prominent, Messrs. Fuller and West, once town proprietors of Ponca, now reside, the former in Omaha and the latter in

Des Moines, Iowa. L. T. Hill, the father of the once prosperous but now defunct town of Ionia, is a citizen of California, and D. T. Bramble, who kept the first store in Ponca, removed many years ago to Yankton. And the Hoeses, Adam Smith, James Barrett, Leander Davis and a host more have gone, so that by death and removal, as well as by the constant additions of new comers, one who only knew the country and people in 1856-7-8, would now, if here, find himself almost a stranger in a strange land.

The number of those who came here in 1857 was much greater than in 1856. In 1857 the Indians assigned their claims to the country and it was surveyed and brought into market and the uncertainties as to title and possession no longer gave trouble. This year, also, there was plenty to do, breaking land, building houses, barns and fences, and labor was in great demand at high prices.

These considerations, together with the promise of good crops encouraged everybody. The general prosperity and the rapid increase of population aroused, during the summer, the ambition of settlers to have a county organization. Ponca, then in Dakota county, but in the northwestern corner of it, hoped to be taken into the new county, as its future in such a new deal, would become more promising. With these ambitious desires in view, the Ponca people at an election, held August 3, 1857, brought forward Dr. S. B. Stough as their candidate for the territorial legislature. Their voting place had been previously and was that year at St. Johns, a town about a mile north of Jackson. St. Johns, though now extinct, was then the largest town in Dakota county and of so much importance that it had recently been nearly successful in an effort to become the county seat in place of Dakota City. In such effort St. Johns received a majority of the votes but not two-thirds, and that being the number required, Dakota City continued to hold the fort. St. Johns did not want Ponca to go into a new county, as it would then make the location of the former too far to one side, and thereby in any future struggle for county seat, be apt to defeat its efforts. On the contrary for the same reasons, residents in the eastern part of Dakota county were anxious to be rid of Ponca and territory enough on the west to bring Dakota City near the center and thus assure its

destiny forever as a county seat. Hence Dakota City and Ponca joined hands to elect Dr. Stough to the legislature, knowing that his election would result in the desired law and would be beneficial to both.

At this election, the last at which Ponca had to go away from home to vote, twenty-seven of Ponca's citizens piled into C. F. Putnam's big hay wagon and went down to St. Johns. The voters of St. Johns objected to their voting, and much eloquent wind was expended on both sides. The St. Johns folks challenged the right of the Poncaites to come there to vote and made threats of black eyes and possible annihilation. In fact there were two or three moderate fights, and both sides had coats off and decks cleared for action, and there would have been a desperate scrimmage had it not been for Father Tracy, the Catholic priest. He quieted the uproar and poured oil on the troubled waters. The men from Ponca put in their votes and tried their best for Dr. Stough. Dakota City helped all it could, but there were not enough votes, all told, to elect him. Hence the new county project was knocked in head for that year.

Misfortunes come in pairs. That truth was demonstrated on the same day their election resulted so disastrously. Their second misfortune was a grasshopper raid, something the settlers had never seen before. Late in the afternoon as the hay wagon with its twenty-seven closely packed voters was returning from St. Johns to Ponca, a phenomenon was seen entirely new to them. It was a great, dark cloud rapidly approaching from the north. As it came near, they saw it was not a rain or dust cloud, and it was thought to be composed of a great collection of cottonwood seeds floating together high in air. When near them, part of the cloud came to the ground and Putnam and Hoese climbed down from the wagon and made examination.

The new visitations resembled the eastern grasshopper somewhat, and as Messrs. Putnam and Hoese had often heard of the dreaded western variety, they readily determined as to what they were.

When the party arrived in Ponca, they found a sorry state of affairs. The 'hoppers, innumerable hosts of them, had come down and were busy eating the gardens and corn fields.

They did not stay long, but diligently improved their time.

Out of this grasshopper raid grew a lawsuit the next day. One, Henniphon, residing up South Creek way, and said to have an inordinate love for his neighbors' property, came before the Squatters Club, and claimed that the cattle of William Jones had destroyed his corn. A committee consisting of Messrs. Forney, Hoese and Harrington, accompanied by Putnam as Sheriff, went out to Henniphon's place to examine the field. They saw no cattle tracks but found plenty of evidence that the damage had been done by the all devouring 'hoppers, and that hence the cause of action was beyond the jurisdiction of the Squatter Court. This little lawsuit episode had for the time, diverted the attention of the settlers from an examination of their own fields. But the sight of Henniphon's demolished crop, opened their eyes to the tremendous strength and industry of a grasshopper's jaws, and they made haste with many forebodings, to investigate. They found that this first grasshopper visit, though short, had wiped out the growing crops of every one of them. During the balance of the fall the new county project was subordinate in all minds to the question as to what they would have to eat the coming winter. Really, the loss was not great, as only about two hundred and seventy-five acres were in crops that year, but it was all the people had and though now-a-days the loss of ten times that amount would cut no figure, then it was a most serious matter and foreshadowed hungry days.

Nor were the fears ill founded. With 1858 hard times came in earnest. In 1856-7 money had been plenty, wages from \$3 to \$5 per day and enough to do. But in 1858 and from that time to and including 1860 there was hardly a dollar between Sioux City and Niobrara. Crops were poor and provisions scarce and the ambition of settlers and the prices of land went down to bed rock. Mr. Putnam says that during those unpropitious years a good farm could have been bought for a dollar. The main difficulty in making such a purchase was to get the dollar.

In these first years of Dixon County life, the pioneer had the usual troubles of those who settle in a new country. Generally with a thin purse and little credit, privations naturally followed. At the start it was expensive for



settlers to come to the west, and when here to plow and plant, build cabins and stables and fairly get business under satisfactory headway. But such expenses and labors even with the additional disappointments and losses from hard times, grasshoppers, short crops, etc., did not often discourage the settlers of Dixon County, especially in the first three years. The pioneer realized that he could well afford to suffer privations. Instead of costing the earnings of a lifetime to purchase a farm, as in the east, he had here a better farm given him. Here was a beautiful country, fertile soil, timber, pure water, and above all a healthy climate. What more could reasonably be asked. What though he might suffer backsets at first and be made to feel the want of many things which in the east were considered indispensable.

Allowing that his purse was empty, his family on short rations, and that a good square meal and a comfortable coat were known to him only in his dreams. These were not calamities but temporary privations which energy and perseverance would cure. But it would have been a calamity to have left his farm with its attendant privations, and go back east, and, no longer the lord of a manor, himself, become a hewer of wood and a drawer of water for others.

The hard times of 1858 did not prevent the settlers from reviving the project for a county organization. This year the election turned out better than it had the year before, and D. T. Bramble, the merchant of Ponca, and naturally greatly interested in its welfare and in the welfare of the country tributary to it, was elected to the territorial legislature, the next session of which was held at Omaha, commencing September 21, 1858.

At that session an act introduced by Mr. Bramble organizing the County of Dixon was passed and duly approved November 1, 1858, with an emergency clause attached. Such act was as follows:

An Act to Organize and Define the Boundaries and Locate the County Seat of Dixon County.

SECTION 1. Be it enacted by the council and house of representatives of the territory of Nebraska, that all that portion of the territory with the following boundaries, to-wit: Commencing at a point where the township line

between townships twenty-nine and thirty strikes the Missouri river; thence west along said line to the section line between sections three and four, township twenty-nine, north, range six, east; thence south to the south line of Dakota county; thence west to a point due south of the southeast corner of Cedar county; thence north to the middle of the main channel of the Missouri river; thence down said channel to the place of beginning, be and the same is hereby organized under the name and style of Dixon County.

SEC. 2. The first election for county officers shall be held in said county on the second Monday in December, A. D. 1858, and shall be conducted in the same manner and governed by the same laws as govern the elections of other counties, excepting that the returns shall be made to the probate judge of Dakota county, who shall issue certificates of election to those who have received a plurality of the votes cast for the respective officers, who shall hold their offices until the next general election.

SEC. 3. At the first election, each qualified voter may designate on his ballot the place of his choice for the county seat of said county, and if any one place receives a majority of the votes cast, it shall be the county seat; if not, the county commissioners shall order a new election to be held within twenty days, and they shall give eight days' notice of the same, when the choice shall be between the two places that receive the highest number of votes at the first election, and the one receiving the majority shall be the county seat.

SEC. 4. At the first election, the polls shall be opened and an election held at Ponca, Galena, Ionia and North Bend, and the same shall be conducted by judges of election appointed by the probate judge of Dakota county, who shall give due notice of the election.

SEC. 5. All acts and parts of acts conflicting with this act are hereby repealed.

SEC. 6. This act to take effect and be in force from and after its passage.

Approved November 1, 1858.

The language used in the above act defining the boundaries of Dixon county, is not the same as that which the statute now prescribes. It means precisely the same, however. The change of the wording was by an act of the legislature in 1859, "To change and redefine the boundaries of Dixon, Cedar and L' Eau-qui-court counties" and which went into effect January 13, 1860. Under that act the boundaries are as follows:

Commencing at the southwest corner of township

twenty-seven, north, range 4, east; thence east to the line dividing sections thirty-three (33) and thirty-four (34) in township twenty-seven, north, of range six east; thence north to the dividing line between townships twenty-nine and thirty, north, of range six east, thence east to the middle of the main channel of the Missouri river; thence up said channel to a point where the dividing line between ranges three and four, east, intersects the same, thence south to the place of beginning.

Up to the time the organization act took effect, November 1, 1858, the government township including Ponca and a strip running north and south, therefrom across the county and three miles wide, had been a part of Dakota county, and it had been expected by many and hoped by all who lived in the western part of the region affected, that the boundary of Dakota county would not be disturbed and that Ponca would remain there.

As heretofore mentioned, two ambitious towns had been started near the mouth of Lime Creek in the northwestern part of that which afterwards became Dixon County. One of those towns, Concord, had a store, post office, a saw mill and four houses, and the other, North Bend, had a mill and a few houses, and in size and population about equalled Concord. Concord and North Bend were less than a mile apart and much rivalry existed between them. In the summer of 1858, when the necessity of a county organization became apparent, it was generally supposed that none of the territory of Dakota county would be disturbed, but that instead, a range of townships on the west (afterwards included in Cedar county) would be incorporated in the new county. Thus Ponca would be left out and either Concord or North Bend was sure to become the county seat.

There would then be no other place of importance in the county, not considering Ionia and Galena, which had but two or three houses apiece, and hence Concord or North Bend would naturally get the prize.

But which of the two was the question. Each wanted it and under no circumstances would consent that the other should have it.

To settle this destructive rivalry the statesmen of the two villages put their heads together and evolved a plan which they immediately put into execution, viz: the towns

being but a short distance apart, the land between them was laid out into a new town, and named Dixon. Thus the rivals came into one town and the central part, Dixon was, expected to become the county seat, and its name, Dixon would henceforth be the name covering the whole.

The new name, Dixon, was made the name of the county, but as afterwards appeared, the honor of naming the new county was all that Dixon received. The member of the territorial legislature in 1858, Mr. Bramble, saw that if Ponca became a part of the new county it would be a powerful and probably successful rival of Dixon. Ponca had already while in Dakota county shown an ambition for county honors. At an election a year or two before to decide the location of Dakota county's capital, Ponca had entered the lists and had received a few votes, and the desire to get rid of the presence of a possible future competitor may have had something to do with Dakota City's ready consent to the loss of that part of Dakota county which included Ponca. Hence the foregoing act for the organization of the county, was advocated by Mr. Bramble without opposition of importance from Dakota county, and none which was effectual from the friends of the new town of Dixon.

But while Dakota City was glad to thus get rid of an ambitious neighbor, the fears of the friends of Dixon that the death knell of their town had thereby been sounded, especially as the desired range of townships on the west had not been taken in, rendered their welcome to the new comer anything but cordial. That their fears were well founded, soon after became apparent.

The act organizing the county provided that on the second Monday of December, 1858, the election of county officers, and the designation of the county seat should take place, and that polls should be opened at Ponca, Galena, Louia and North Bend.

In the short time between the approval of the law and the holding of the election, every one was busy in behalf of his favorite town for county seat and his candidates for county officers. The combination of North Bend and Concord gave them encouraging strength, yet Ponca had eight buildings and about a dozen families, thus equaling the Concord-Dixon-North Bend triumvirate in that respect.

Not very metropolitan were these young cities, it must be confessed, but in ambition, hope and good feeling they were equal to many towns that put on more size. The entire population of the county at that time was about three hundred.

When the election came off desperate efforts for success were made by each of the rival localities. It has been said by some that the tremendous array of votes on that occasion indicated that the population of the county had suddenly jumped to greater proportions than ever before or since. Whether voters came from across the river or whether votes were put into the box in behalf of absent eastern friends, as asserted by some and denied by others, can hardly be told at this late day. Nor does it specially matter, as all, if any, resorted to the same tactics and the result was probably the same it would have been had the extra votes been left out. So long as it did not affect the result, it did no harm to vote absent friends or even Indians and in fact might have been useful as a showing that Dixon county was rapidly acquiring an immense population.

The result, loudly celebrated in Ponca on election night after the returns were in, was that Ponca had been victorious and that its eight buildings were located at the capital of the county. Tradition informs us that on that happy, exuberant occasion, the countenances of its citizens, Messrs. Bisbee, Porter, Stough, Todd, et al, shone with joy and enthusiasm.

But while Ponca rejoiced, the defeat of Dixon caused it to soon disappear from the map and even from memory. It never had a house, and being on low ground was unfit for a house to stand on. Its only use was to marry the rival towns of Concord and North Bend, and after its mission had been fulfilled and had failed to do them or itself any good, it once more was thought of as a tract of cheap prairie, fit only for hay land. It now is a part of the farm of John Gunderson.

It may be proper to add here that in a few years Concord and North Bend petered out, their buildings were moved away or torn down, and their town sites became farms. Such is the frequent end of western town site enterprises.

The election which transformed Ponca into a county seat

also provided its first officers. They were:

Commissioners—John Cavanagh, H. A. Fuller and J. Massinger.

County Clerk Edward Arnold.

County Judge J. B. Denton.

Treasurer John Malone.

Surveyor S. B. Stough.

Sheriff Charles F. Putnam.

Thus Dixon county was finally started out on its official career. Those who were elected were men of integrity, and their careful and intelligent management of county affairs showed that the confidence of voters had not been misplaced.

We do not learn the names of those who were elected at this first election, from any records. There are no records which we can find here or in the secretary of state's office at Lincoln showing that any election was held at all. In all things therefore relating this election we have been compelled to rely entirely on the memories of a few of those who were present on that occasion.

As will be seen from its metes and bounds, Dixon county touches the Missouri on the north, has the river and Dakota county on the east, Wayne county on the south and Cedar county on the west.

It has four hundred and eighty-six square miles, or three hundred and eleven thousand and forty (311,040) acres. It is a tract of land which is most fortunate in several respects. It has not a single worthless or marshy acre. About one-fourth of it is bottom land, the balance is rolling, and all of it has a rich soil, varying from three to six feet in depth and capable of producing immense crops.

There is no lack of water. The Logan river runs through the southern part, and the Daily, Aoway, West Branch, Turkey, Powder and Lime creeks in the central and northern parts of the county. In addition are a great number of small tributaries, so that nearly every quarter section in the county has a living stream upon it. Along the Missouri the vast tracts of timber, oak, elm, black walnut, hickory, etc., warranted to settlers abundant supplies of fire wood and lumber.

Such was the unsurpassed country which by the grace of

the general government, the territorial legislature and the industry and energy of the pioneers, became Dixon county and the future home of thousands of prosperous citizens.

After the election of its first county officers and the location of its capital, the new county of Dixon moved forward as hopefully as could be expected. Dixon, by becoming a full-fledged county, did not disturb the equilibrium of the other counties of the state, nor by its growth excite their jealousy. Nor did Ponca under its new honors become unduly swelled with pride and importance, nor bound into notice as a rival of Omaha. Its growth from that time forward, was at about the same pace as previously, somewhat slow, yet its future, under the circumstances, seemed more assured than before.

## CHAPTER IV.

DIXON COUNTY'S PROGRESS ITS OFFICIALS AND THEIR METHODS OF DOING BUSINESS FIRST BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, THEIR PROCEEDINGS AND RECORDS, AND THE MANY DIFFICULTIES THEY HAD TO ENCOUNTER—THE FIRST ASSESSMENT OF PROPERTY AND THE POVERTY-STRICKEN DISPLAY OF WEALTH HARD TIMES AND FEW IMPROVEMENTS FIRST SCHOOL IN COUNTY CALL FOR TROOPS IN 1862 AND ENLISTMENT IN DIXON COUNTY ED. FREEMAN KILLED IN BATTLE OF WHITESTONE HILL INDIAN SCARES IN 1863 STAMPEDE OF SETTLERS FROM THE NIobrARA COUNTRY THE DROUTH IN 1864 AND THE GREAT CROPS IN 1865 RAILROAD PROPOSITION OF 1869 THE GROWTH OF PONCA AND THE RISE AND FALL OF IONIA.

There are no records in existence of what the first board of county commissioners did, or where they met. Old settlers, however, say that the first meeting was held in Bramble's log store, that the second was in blacksmith Roger's house, and that afterwards and for several years the commissioners met in Davis' tavern (now Bigley's).

As to the other county officers, they did business wherever they happened to be, and carried their records in their hats.

Of the commissioners acts at their first meeting, or during the first year we have but slight information. If they kept any proceedings at all, they were not preserved. It may reasonably be presumed, however, that they came together, swore one another into office, and in some way more or less skillful, commenced turning the new county machinery. They divided the county into commissioner's districts, appointed the metes and bounds of road and school districts, took into consideration two or three proposed roads, and talked about the prospect of raising money in the future by taxes so as to keep the wheels of the county's



progress suitably greased. It is not likely that at the first meeting of the commissioners, nor indeed during the first year, many bills were presented. If there were, we may safely assert that none were paid. There were no funds and it was generally understood that any pay for what was done, was, as to the county, a long way off.

The county did not in fact, start out in a very propitious time. The prosperous days of 1856 and 1857 had gone by. Then every one had his pockets full of money and felt rich; now the reverse was the rule. The winter of 1857-8 had been one of tremendous snows and much suffering. In the spring following, hard times, and scarcity of money and provisions had induced many to leave, some to Pike's Peak, others to their old homes in the east. While many left, the few new settlers who came in were not one-fourth as many as in 1856 or 1857. The winter of 1858-9 was also a hard and unhappy winter and the general scarcity of provisions and other comforts of life which had prevailed for more than a year past, seemed to have become chronic. Hence when the commissioners and other officers started in to pilot their new county during the first part of its voyage, the outlook was discouraging. That they persevered and kept up the organization when everything naturally seemed to indicate that the abandonment of the country to the Indians again would be the result in the near future, was certainly in their favor.

In the following spring, (1859) the first assessment of the county took place. It was made by Sheriff Putnam and was one of the most poverty-stricken displays of a county's wealth ever seen before or since. Mr. Putnam tells us that about twenty tracts of land, each of one hundred and sixty acres, were assessed, the valuation being fixed at \$1.25 per acre. There were also a few hogs and cattle and half a dozen horses. That was all there was of it. There were no such elaborate inventories of property as are used by assessors now-a-days. There was no need. A trivial array of cattle, horses and hogs, and the few tracts of deeded land comprised the entire property, the assessed valuation of which, according to Mr. Putnam's recollection was not far from \$4,800. It is obvious that the assessment was not a job which occupied any great length of time.

In the June after, the commissioners came together and

proceeded to equalize the assessment and make the levy, and take such further steps as would at the proper time in the future, result in the collection of taxes, the amount of which was about \$300.

During this year very few buildings were built in Ponca and not many in the country. Here and there a new comer would be seen putting up a sod or log house on his claim, or breaking a few acres of land. A feeling of discouragement had grown until settlers were averse to improving their places, and they preferred to sell out if they could, and go elsewhere. Many did go, so that in 1859 the county had less inhabitants than two years before.

Of course under such a state of affairs, improvements, public or private, were not thought of. The roads were mere paths over the face of the country. Bridges were, as yet, too costly a luxury for the county to build. Groves, fruit orchards and vineyards had not yet been dreamed of and were not for several years afterwards.

Residents of Dixon County, who in these later days talk about hard times, do not realize that their predecessors had in 1858 and 1859, more real, solid privations in one hour of time than can now be suffered in an entire year.

In the following year, 1860, the pressure of hard times was not quite so severe. In the spring a grist mill was built at Ponca by Stough Brothers and N. S. Porter. Thus a little more life was given to the town, and a better market for the county. Aside from this there were few new buildings or improvements. As a pointer showing what was being done, take the amount of land broken. In 1857 there had been about two hundred and seventy acres; in 1858, four times that amount, and in 1859 and 1860, scarcely any.

As in the previous year, many settlers moved away in 1860 and few came in to take their places, and the population dwindled down to about two hundred. Not very encouraging, in fact, to those who remained. It is said that more would have gone, if they had been able to raise money enough to pay the ferriage across the Missouri, which, as merciless as the river Styx, barred the way. Among those who went to Pike's Peak were Messrs. Putnam, Farwell, Carpenter, Alexander, Felter and Higgins. They went in the spring and a few of them returned in the fall.

In the meanwhile, in spite of the universal discouragement, the county officers, in a dim sort of way to be sure, kept up the county organization. The commissioners met, ordered an assessment, levied taxes, established voting precincts and went through the forms and ceremonies which they deemed necessary to keep the flag of Dixon county flying at mast-head. During this year, as in the year before and for several years afterwards, county offices were not much sought after. Neither the honor nor profit sufficiently compensated for the trouble and annoyance. Hence, when one was elected he was liable to neglect the honor thrust upon him and the office would become vacant and have to be filled by the commissioners. In another place we have given a list of the officers of the county from its organization to the present time. That there are probably mistakes, especially in regard to the sheriffs and commissioners, is owing to the frequent changes and neglect to record them.

In some instances the only proof to be found that a man had held an office at all, was the account which he filed with the commissioners for his services. Such account being approved and allowed (though with the depleted treasury we may be sure it was not paid) became conclusive proof. There were no records of commissioners' proceedings at all until July, 1860, and for years they were too incomplete to give much of an idea what was being done. It was on account of the slipshod way of doing business in those days, that the legislature afterwards came to the aid of the commissioners, and by a legalizing act covered, as with a merciful blanket, their illegal omissions and commissions.

The years 1861 and 1862 may be said to have been repetitions of 1860. Hard times continued and the few who came hardly equalled the number who went away.

In the spring of 1862 the first school of which there is any account, was held in the county. It was taught by Miss Mary Jones, of Elk Creek, Dakota County, in the first school house built in Ponca on the ground where Ponca's school building now is. That school is claimed to have been the first nor is there much to show to the contrary, the only paper bearing on this point being a report from Ionia in October, 1860, which notified the county board that there were fifteen children of school age in that district.

Whether the Ionia report was merely a hint that a school was needed or whether it is proof that Ionia school district had a school in full blast, readers must determine for themselves. From such report it appears that the seven families which contributed the aforesaid fifteen children to the population of the county, were those of L. T. Hill, S. P. Baltzley, A. Curry, Henry Hoese, Gustavus Smith, R. A. Hotchkiss, and A. Smith. The distance between the places where these families resided at that time, indicates that their school district was fully as large as two government townships.

In 1862 the settlers were first invited to help in the war then raging, and in the fall of that year, a number of the patriotic residents of Dixon county enlisted in Company I of the 2nd Regiment of Nebraska Infantry, commanded by Colonel Furnas. This company was recruited from Dakota, Dixon and Cedar counties, and camped a part of the winter of 1862-3 at Ponca.

Those who enlisted from Dixon county were N. S. Porter, Pat Scollard, John Scollard, Bernard Cavanagh, Francis Freeman, Charles Freeman, Ed. Freeman, Edward Arnold, John Malone, James O'Conner, John O'Commer, O. P. Baltzley, Frank Jourdan, W. P. Heydon, Nelson Feauto, James Clark, Elias Shook, P. J. Winston, James Alexander, M. Lathrop and Mons Nelson. The next spring, (1863) Gen. Sully ordered the regiment to go up the river to assist in capturing the Sioux Indians which were then on the war-path. In the battle of Whitestone Hill, Company I participated, and one of its members from Dixon County, Ed. Freeman, was killed. The regiment returned down the river in November and was mustered out of service.

Dixon county since its first settlement had sometimes had Indian scares and in 1863 they were more frequent and serious than before. Once, four marauding Sioux Indians made a raid to steal cattle and horses. Messrs. Porter, Wilbur and some others went after them, exchanged shots with them and chased them out of the South Creek and Silver Creek country, and finally ran them across the Missouri.

One day in the summer a great crowd of people, comprising nearly every one living west as far as the Niobrara river came rushing into Ponca. They came with wagons, horses, cattle, furniture and provisions, and were frightened

almost to death. They reported that the Indians were coming in force, killing and burning everything in their path. The terror stricken people had not seen the Indians nor any evidence of Indian depredations, but a vague rumor started by some rascally up-river traders had excited them into an ungovernable stampede. So they came, a great drove of unreasoning and wildly frightened people, into Ponca. They proposed to continue their flight the next morning but by the efforts of cooler headed men in Ponca, they were induced to stay until a party could go back and see what real reason there was for the panic.

Accordingly a company of forty well armed frontiersmen started on the back track the next morning. They saw no Indians but they saw and shot at several buffalo. The prairies were generally on fire on both sides of the river. They went to Niobrara and never in the whole trip saw a hostile face. Their trip lasted about a week and in that time many fat turkeys and chickens, and all the government tobacco and whiskey within reach were disposed of to the satisfaction of all concerned. After their return the frightened up-country people laughed at their previous fears and took up their line of march back to their homes again.

About this time a much more serious matter, a most atrocious tragedy in fact, occurred. In Cedar county and near the Dixon county line, a small party of Sioux Indians who came over from Dakota, murdered the Wiseman family. The murderous band was immediately pursued but escaped across the river. All these matters kept up much unhappy excitement throughout the river counties, and not until the Indians were again brought under subjection were settlers fully assured of peace and safety.

Thus the county, without much improvement and with many hardships, drifted along until 1864, and this year seemed to be the climax of grief. There was a drouth that year. Previously they had grumbled over poor crops. Now there were no crops at all.

Concerning that ill-fated season, C. F. Putnam and John McKinley tell us that there was not a drop of rain from late in the fall of 1863 to early in the spring of 1865, fifteen months. A terrible experience, certainly, and presenting an almost hopeless outlook. The torrid heat, the ground baked

to the hardness of brick, the failing springs and streams and not a blade of corn or grass, or sign of crop of any kind to vary the desolate monotony, seemed to denote that the productive forces of nature were dead and the country had become a desert.

There was no corn, no vegetables and no grain, and no grass excepting a little on Logan Slough. Corn and wheat which had been put into the ground in the spring remained there all summer without a sign of life. That the settlers managed to get through the trying time was a source of wonder even to themselves. Their land was barren and worthless for the time and the livelihood of themselves and cattle had to be obtained from other sources.

How did they manage? Old settlers say that the body of timber along the Missouri helped them to bridge the crisis. From this forest, great numbers of logs, especially of black walnut, were cut by the settlers, some from their own land and others from that of the government, and rafted down the river and sold. Again, settlers went out (not for fun, that word being out of date that season) and beat the fields and woods for game and the river and creeks for fish. Deer, wolves and bear were met with sometimes, and squirrels, prairie chickens and wild ducks. In the winter, mink, beaver and muskrat were trapped and their skins sent to market. Those who had cattle and hogs, sold them when want pinched too hard. Thus in various ways the flour barrel was kept replenished, and means provided to sustain life, give shelter and clothing and drive the wolf from the door.

Another such a fifteen months, had it then followed would necessarily have driven out of the country every man, woman and child.

Fortunately at the end of this fifteen months of bales, rain came. Not a gentle moisture, daintily spread, but an abundant and long continued downpour. The hard baked earth yielded to its influence and vegetation awakening from its sleep again bedecked the valleys and plains with verdure and flowers. Courage came back, and again the settlers plowed and planted, and their hope turned into joy as their crops boomed and rich harvests became certainties. No more hungry days were in store, no more trapping of

muskrats or stealing government timber, and no more solacing ravenous hunger with corn bread and salt, washed down with brackish water. As if ashamed of itself for its previous niggardly treatment of the settlers, nature gave them in 1865, enormous crops, the greatest, grandest and most lavish that had ever been seen in the country.

The year 1865 was indeed, a most generous year. More land was broken, more houses built and more improvements made than all combined since 1857. Grand crops, a big emigration and a general lifting from despair to joy and plenty. The tide had now turned, and from that time forward, rapid growth and development was assured.

The great number of those who came in 1865 as well as in succeeding years to make their homes in Dixon County, renders it impossible, except in few instances, to mention them separately. In another place, however, notices of many of the leading pioneers will be given, as well as sketches of those citizens whose energy and good works in behalf of the county are and have been prominent.

In the presence of plenty, the previous hard times were soon forgotten, and the incoming settlers, from 1865 onward during many prosperous years, joyfully took their homesteads, plowed and put in crops, fenced, built houses, started groves and planted orchards. As time went on, and people became able, the desire was awakened to have homes which were more than mere shelters from the storm. No longer the gloomy cabin, the rude home-made benches and table, and from the narrow window, no longer the dreary outlook, sufficed. The neglected garden, usually a wilderness of tangled growth, was made useful as well as beautiful in its order and cleanliness, and its vegetables, sweet corn, grape vines and shrubbery.

The home by degrees became transformed into a brighter and more enjoyable place to rear a family in. The rude necessaries gave place to tasty furniture and adornments, the dingy walls, doors and casings were made new and cheerful by paint and paper, and larger windows were demanded to give views of the gardens, flower beds and fields. Even some homes had carpets, and the family library, previously a collection of almanacs, could boast of a few useful and interesting books.

A great field of wheat or corn, or herd of fat cattle, demanded of the farmer that he become posted on the markets, and hence newspapers became necessary, and he was thus introduced to what was going on in the outside world. Previously his main care had been to feed and protect his family, now, however, under the stimulus of prosperity and awakened reflection, the feeding of the stomach became secondary to the desire to learn and know, and to give his family those advantages of education and society which he, himself, had by his lonely frontier life been deprived of.

In those days Sioux City was the main place of market for the residents of this county. To go to Sioux City and return, required two days' time and a hard journey by wagon. Merchandise was brought in that way, and as to wheat and hogs, what was not sold in Ponca was carted to Sioux City in a laborious and expensive manner.

A railroad into Dixon county, therefore became a growing desire. The first project of that kind was in 1869. It was originated by S. T. Davis of Sioux City, who proposed to build a railroad from that place through Dixon County to Niobrara. Preliminary surveys were made, and all that was needed to complete the undertaking was the money necessary to build and equip it. Propositions for aid were therefore made to Dixon and other counties on the west. Dixon County was asked to vote \$68,000, and the people were assured that if such bonds were furnished, the road would be built without delay.

The proposition, plausible and alluring, inasmuch as a railroad was exactly what the county needed, was talked over and considered by the citizens, but they hardly felt able to incur a debt of such magnitude. It was, therefore, abandoned, and railroad building had to wait until a more propitious time.

As has been mentioned in chapter third, Ponca was surveyed in part and named in the fall of 1856, and a log house was built by Hoese Brothers, and in 1857 houses were put up by Stough Brothers, John Cavanagh and H. A. Fuller, a house and blacksmith shop by Mr. Rogers and a store by Mr. Bramble.

In 1858, the growth of the town continued though slowly. During this year several houses were built, and one



which stood on the claim of Leander Davis near New Castle was moved to Ponca and placed on a lot near where the school house is. Afterwards in 1860 it was moved by Porter, Bisbee and Todd to the Bigley lot on East street. To the same lot they soon after moved a house which had been built in 1859 for Mr. Bramble on the lots where Dr. Stough's residence now is. These two buildings were joined together and made into a hotel (the first hotel in town) which was kept by Mr. Davis and is now known as the Bigley House.

Up to 1858, Ponca people crossed the Aoway by a log bridge which had been built by settlers two years before. It was a dubious sort of a bridge and dreaded by everyone who crossed. In 1858 the government built a good, substantial bridge, and passing over the Aoway was no longer a terror to man and beast.

Among other evidences of Ponca's rising importance it may be mentioned that on May 14, 1859, it held its first election of trustees. Five were to be elected, and twelve votes were cast. Of these N. S. Porter received ten votes; Leander Davis, nine; E. M. Bisbee, eleven; H. A. Fuller, eleven; D. T. Bramble, ten, and C. W. Todd, J. C. Harrington, R. Rogers and James Barrett received one each.

In 1859, Francis Freeman completed a dwelling house, Blacksmith Rogers built a frame residence, Mr. Chapman a blacksmith shop and two or three small houses were put up by parties whose names are now unknown.

In that year Ponca's first school house was erected. It was on the ground where the high school building now stands and was built by subscription. The building was afterwards sold and removed, and a larger school house built about the year 1865 by H. Beardshear.

In 1860, several more buildings were erected, one of the most important of which was the grist mill of Stough Brothers. Two years afterwards a saw mill was built in connection with the grist mill.

The first Fourth of July celebration ever held in Ponca, took place in that mill in 1862. On that momentous occasion the eagle was assisted to scream by W. H. James (afterwards governor of the state) who was orator of the day, and Judge Arnold who read the Declaration of Independence.

The music was by Gustavus Smith and family of New Castle.

In 1861 the first Lutheran church was built and was the only church building in town until 1871 when churches were erected by the Presbyterians and Methodists.

During the years from 1862 to 1870 the growth of Ponca continued very slow. In 1869 a store building was erected on Third street by Stough and Mikesell and another by Porter and Gamble in 1871 on the corner of Third and East streets.

In '69, '70 and '71 an unusually large number of residences were built, some of them quite expensive and stylish. Among them was the brick house of John Stough (the first brick house in town), and the large frame residences of Dr. Stough and N. S. Porter.

From 1860 to 1870 and for a few years afterwards, the town next in importance to Ponca, was Ionia. Ionia had a beautiful, but as it turned out, unfortunate location on the bank of the Missouri.

In 1856, a Sioux City company, in which were said to be Messrs. Cunningham, White and John H. Charles, surveyed and staked out the town of Ionia, twelve miles from Ponca up the river.

In the spring of 1857, L. T. Hill, a merchant of Davenport, Iowa, engaged J. J. Pierce and his son, H. M. Pierce, of that city, to come west and locate a town site for him. The accordingly journeyed across the state to Sioux City, and from thence into Dixon county. It was a long trip. There was no railroad, and an ox team and wagon was with them as it usually was with others at that early day, the mode of conveyance.

In Dixon county they found that the Sioux City proprietors of Ionia wished to sell out, and Messrs. Pierce purchased and held the site for Mr. Hill until May 22, 1859, when he and his family arrived.

He found a very wild country. A few settlers were scattered up and down Aoway Creek, and two families were living near the new town of Ionia, one of which was that of Mr. Massenger and his son-in-law, Andrew White, and the other was the Hotchkiss family on the Hotchkiss bottom, so called. In Ionia two small buildings had been built the year

before, and during the year 1859 two or three more were added by Mr. Hill.

From this time forward for several years, Ionia, like other new western towns of that period, was not greatly encouraged by growth and business. In 1860 Mr. Hill built Ionia's first ferry boat, a boat which was a great assistance to the farmers of Dixon and Dakota counties who had to cross the Missouri while making trips to Fort Randall with produce. Fort Randall with a garrison of five hundred soldiers furnished an excellent market, the best within reach, and high prices were paid for everything the farmers had to sell.

In 1862, the large amount of timber on the Ionia river bottom induced Mr. Hill to erect a steam saw mill there. It was started in December and for several years did a large business. In the spring of 1865, the excessively high water in the Missouri cut away the bank and endangered the mill, and in the next year it was moved to a safer point, and a grist mill was added in 1867. In that year, 1867, Messrs. Fitzgerald and Lynes built the first store, and in 1868 Isaac Hughes built a hotel.

In 1869 Levins and Rose built a large, two story store and put in a good stock of general merchandise.

An encouraging number of residences, shops and other buildings were also added in that year, and in 1870 a large amount of building was done, and the town was increased by many new families.

An inventory of Ionia's business houses at that time shows in addition to the mill and hotel, three stores, one blacksmith shop, one wagon and repair shop, one shoe maker shop and several carpenter shops.

Also Ellyson Brothers built to run between Ionia and the Dakota side the first steam ferry boat on the river above Sioux City.

In 1870 and 1871 Ionia continued to grow in size and increase in business, and in 1872 it had a population of about three hundred.

In 1874 the encroachment of the river, which previously had not excited much apprehension became alarmingly worse. The channel changed so that its force threatened the destruction of the town. Afterwards up to 1878, the

cutting away of the bank continued and increased. For safety many of the buildings were moved away, and in that year the river swept out a large share of the town site and within two or three years thereafter the work of destruction was completed. Such in brief was the beginning and end of Ionia.

## CHAPTER V.

INDIAN SCARES AND ANNOYANCES—N. S. PORTER'S INTERVIEW WITH "SMOKER" OF "LITTLE RABBIT'S" BAND—L. T. HILL'S EXPERIENCES WITH INDIANS AT IONIA—J. MURPHY OF SOUTH CREEK HAS AN UNPLEASANT VISIT—INDIAN POWWOWS AND DANCES—THE ANCIENT INDIAN TRIBES AND LEGENDS.

Before continuing the history of the general progress of the county from and after 1869, we will make reference to Indian scares and experiences prior to that time as well as to the tales and legends concerning the savage red men who seventy-five or a hundred years before had ruled in Dixon county.

In the time elapsing since the first white settlers came, little real trouble had been occasioned by the Indians except in the few instances related in the last chapter. Indian visits were generally nothing worse than attempts on their part to raid corn cribs or pork barrels. Hence there are no tales of Indian wars in Dixon county since its first settlement by the whites, no massacres of defenseless inhabitants, no midnight glare of burning buildings and no hordes of painted savages with reeking tomahawks. None of these things were ever seen by the settlers, nor often heard of except in the blood curdling tales of eastern romancers, nine-tenths of whom never saw an Indian or knew what they were talking about.

Yet though nothing especially serious ever took place in their intercourse with the red men, old settlers, on looking back over those first years will recall many little experiences which they had with them, and which might have been described as comedy but never as tragedy. About the only exceptions to this rule near Dixon county was the murder of the Wiseman children in Cedar county and that of C. S. Munson in Wayne. Aside from these instances,

Indian visits were more amusing than terrifying, and served to break the sameness of frontier life.

The first of such harmless Indian scares took place a day or two after the arrival of the first batch of settlers in May, 1856. On that occasion a squad of Poncas crossed the Aoway and visited the settlers' camp while the men were away looking out claims in the neighborhood. With a great flourish of tomahawks and knives the Indians frightened the three women in camp almost to death and made them glad to purchase peace by giving up a generous share of their provisions. This sort of annoyance from roving bands was often afterwards practiced on the settlers, and the story of one was generally the story of all. There would be a blustering display of knives and hatchets, a big fright among the women and children, and finally peace obtained by handing over corn and bacon and whatever else the visiting Indians took a fancy to carry off.

In the fall of 1859, N. S. Porter had an interview with one of the Ponca tribe, which terminated in less fun for the Indian than usual in such cases. Mr. Porter was helping D. T. Bramble in his store in Ponca. One day Mr. Bramble went to Sioux City leaving Porter in charge of the business. At that time the goods most in demand were bacon, salt, tobacco and whiskey, the latter being only sold by the gallon. In the afternoon of the day in question, a band of Ponca Indians about a thousand strong came in from their reservation west of Niobrara and camped east of town in the grove now known as Stough's grove (near the present fair ground).

Possibly to fittingly celebrate their visit to their ancient home, two young warriors came up from their camp early in the evening and bought and carried back with them a quantity of tobacco and a jug of whiskey. Soon after they left, Porter was greatly alarmed on learning from John Bramble the brother of the proprietor, that by selling liquor to the Indians he had violated the law, and his worry was kept at a fever heat by Bisbee, Todd and Clark, who were at the store at the time and who enlarged on the enormity of the crime and the dire punishment that would follow if found out. To add to his trouble as the evening advanced the uproar in the Indian camp increased as though the

jugfull was doing considerable execution, and that an Indian outbreak was liable.

The Indians kept up their dancing and shouting until near midnight when twenty of them came to the store and loudly called for more whiskey. Porter refused their demands and told them he had no right to sell to them, and advised them to return to their camp. Instead of doing so, they commenced to beat the door with their hatchets. Porter partly opened the door when they shoved in their jug and it was broken, and one of them named "Smoker" of "Little Rabbit's" band raised his hatchet to strike. Porter caught the Indian's arm and grabbed up a stick of wood, then threw it away and gave the Indian a tremendous blow with his fist under the jaw. The Indian fell as though shot, striking on his head several feet away, and lay there apparently lifeless. Porter barred and closed the door and listened tremblingly to the loud threats of fifty or more Indians who had by that time gathered around the fallen brave. In a few minutes, however, the noise ceased, and on looking out, he saw the Indians steering for their camp, two of them leading the one who had been knocked down. Soon after, the proprietor, Mr. Bramble, came home and Porter told him what had occurred. Bramble said it might have been very serious but he hoped the danger was over.

At sunrise the next morning, Chief "Iron Whip" and about fifty warriors came up leading the victim of the night before. His head and face appeared as though banged by a trip hammer.

Iron Whip told Bramble by signs that Smoker was badly hurt, but if he could have some whiskey to dose him with and some more to bathe him in, he thought he could cure him. Bramble took the chief and Smoker and two others into the back room and when they came out wiping their mouths, their faces shone with satisfaction and they expressed the opinion that Smoker would now feel a "heap" better. As a final token of friendship they demanded that Porter and the wounded Indian shake hands. This was done and harmony again prevailed. During several years after, Porter often met Smoker and other members of Little Rabbit's band, and they showed no resentment toward him. They said Porter was a brave man for striking with his fist

when he could have used a club, and no doubt this was the reason for not resenting the blow and taking his scalp.

The above, one of many similar incidents of frontier life, was somewhat threatening at first, but wound up at the end in renewed peace.

Mr. L. T. Hill gives the following account of the visit in the fall of 1860 of a band of Indians to his house in Ionia during his absence in Omaha. He says "I left Charley Smith to protect the family and look after things generally. One day while Charley was away, Mrs. Hill left the children at the house and went up the ravine to pick some plums. While there she thought she heard voices, and on looking in the direction of the sound, she saw several Indians mounted on ponies rapidly coming down the ravine towards her.

"She was greatly alarmed and started for home on a run. By taking a short cut across a field she reached the house before the Indians and shut and barred the doors. The Indians did not attempt to enter, but she could hear their voices and she finally came to the conclusion that if her fate was doomed she might as well face it.

"She thereupon took the children with her and went out to where they were. A little way from the house stood a grindstone and the Indians were there sharpening their hatchets and knives. That naturally added to her terror, but knowing her inability to escape, she put on a bold face. They greeted her in their usual manner, 'how, how' and said 'tobac, tobac.'

"We had a barrel of fine cut in the house and Mrs. Hill went in and brought out a large pan full of it and told the Indians to help themselves. She said they expressed great joy at the sight of so much 'tobac' and stowed it away in a short time. After a brief jabber among themselves one of them ran to where their ponies were tied and brought to her a large chunk of jerked venison. Then they finished grinding their knives, and to the great relief of Mrs. Hill and the children, mounted their ponies and left. It was afterwards learned that the Indians were from Dakota and had been over in the Elkhorn valley on a pony stealing raid, and now on their return were hunting for a place to ford the Missouri."

Mr. Hill also furnishes an account of another adventure



at Ionia with the Indians. The trouble which grew out of a lawsuit is thus described by him: "In the winter of 1860 one John Gidross, living temporarily on the Hotchkiss place near Ionia, became indebted to J. J. and H. M. Pierce, \$30 or \$40, and without paying them moved his cattle and goods across the Missouri into Dakota where there was no law.

"One morning the oxen of Gidross were found on the Nebraska side, having crossed the river on the ice. Being a Justice of the Peace I was called upon to issue an attachment for the oxen, and James Barrett then acting as sheriff, levied on them, and placed them in the care of Andrew White until they could be advertised and sold. The day of sale came as did the sheriff. About ten o'clock in the morning, Gidross and a friend of his, a Frenchman, were seen to come out of the timber opposite Ionia and start across the river. They had found out where the sale was to take place and not knowing that the sheriff was on the ground thought it a good time to recapture the cattle. When they were across, they waved their caps and in a few moments six Indians came out of the timber and followed Gidross.

"There was no little excitement but Barrett was cool and told the people (only about half a dozen) not to be frightened but get their guns ready. At the same time he sent a messenger down the river to Andrew White and his father-in-law, Massenger, not to bring the oxen, but to come at once with their rifles.

"In a few minutes the Indians were on the Nebraska side and they and the Frenchman went into the cabin of the Pierces, and soon after two Indians were seen to bring H. M. Pierce out, he not resisting much. They led him a little way and began to trip him. Barrett could plainly see that the Indians felt ugly. He said 'Boys, them cusses mean trouble; get your guns,' and led the way followed by six well armed men.

"As they came into view of the Indians, Barrett shouted to them with a loud voice and a big oath, 'What in hell are you doing there, let that man alone.' It was no sooner said than done. They left Pierce and hurried back into the cabin. Barrett followed them and ordered them out, and gave Gidross and his gang five minutes to get across

the river, saying that if they were not off in that time he 'would kill every d—d one of them.' Barrett was a large, powerful man with a voice corresponding in size, and with an eye that emphasized every word. The Frenchman said a few words to the Indians and they lost no time in getting upon the ice and from there into the Dakota timber.

"After a short consultation it was agreed that it would be best to adjourn the sale to Ponca and to have the oxen removed there that night. They were accordingly taken there, but the following morning no oxen were to be found. It was evident the cattle had been followed and stolen and were now across the river. That was the most exciting experience we ever had at Ionia with the Indians."

After the removal in 1857 of the Poncas to their lands beyond the Niobrara, Dixon county was on the route between that reservation and that of the Omahas, and bands of Indians often passed through from one reservation to the other. On their trips they generally behaved themselves, though sometimes, as has been said, they frightened settlers into giving them what they wanted, that being the Indian way of begging. One of these scares was given J. Murphy who settled in 1857 in South Creek valley, south of Cavanagh's place. In the fall of 1858 a small party of Indians in their trip across the country camped for a while near Murphy's claim and sometimes stole corn out of his crib for their ponies. One day he found a young Indian in the crib and kicked him out.

That night at midnight the whole band, twenty or more in number came and surrounded his cabin and called to him to come out. As he cautiously opened the door an Indian reached in and pulled him out by his hair, tearing off his shirt in the squabble. The Indians then stationed him on a knoll where the keen wind would bite his limbs and around him formed a ring in which they also placed the young fellow who had been kicked. Then singing and whooping and pounding a drum, they circled around in a war dance, and when the chorus would come in, Mr. Murphy would be kicked by as many feet as could conveniently reach him, and the young Indian would draw his tomahawk and pretend he would strike him.

For an hour or two, the Indians thus enjoyed themselves while Murphy's wife and children were begging them not to kill him. At last they consented to spare his life if his wife would give them all the flour and bacon she had on hand, which she gladly did. Murphy was taken into the house where a good fire soon thawed him out, but the fright of himself and family was so great that they dared not stay there longer, and in a few days they abandoned their claim and moved to Dakota county.

Very often, and especially in the peaceable years following the troubles of 1863, parties of Indians while passing through the county on a hunting or visiting tour, would camp at night a short distance from Ponca. On such occasions, if in summer, the warriors were dressed in their warm weather costume of mainly paint and feathers, and were generally accompanied by some venerable copper colored patriarch as chief in command. If squaws were with such parties they were gorgeously arrayed in gaily colored blankets, which, together with papposes, ponies, tepees, dogs and the kettles to cook them in, made up quite an interesting aboriginal crowd.

Sometimes the chief in command would be one who had been a "big Injun" at an earlier day. One afternoon such a party passed through town and camped at their usual place, and was said to be in charge of "Wabashaw," one of the noted chiefs who had handled the scalping knife and tomahawk with much skill and murder in the Minnesota massacre a few years before, and who for his misdeeds had been sent to rusticate during the balance of his life with the rest of the Santee tribe on a reservation near Niobrara. Several went out to see and strike up acquaintance with so renowned a killer, and found him a harmless personification of good nature, of whom it was difficult to believe that in 1862, he used to relentlessly prance down the warpath after the whites, his most cherished ornaments being a dozen or so of scalps. It is said he was the most fastidious scalper of the Santee Sioux, and loved the headgear of women and children for ornamental purposes better than any other. When last in Minnesota he grieved because he had not succeeded in cleaning out the whole state. On the occasion of this visit to him, the only thing which seemed to trouble

his placid nature was the fact that water was no longer capable of assuaging his thirst, and if his visitors had a bottle of fire water with them, he would like to gather a little of it under his wings. When his visitors told him they were not prepared in that respect, he looked sad and incredulous, and refusing to talk to them more, folded his arms and gazed contemplatively towards the setting sun.

Occasionally when a band of Indians came along, the settlers would have the fun of seeing an Indian dance. Such entertainments were grand, gaudy and peculiar, and were always witnessed by a large crowd of spectators. A circle of ten or fifteen tremendous, face painted warriors would show an agility and leg lifting talent entirely different from what the white people were accustomed to see. Accompanied by music pounded out of a drum or kettle, the performers would squat about half way to the ground and hump themselves around in a stiff legged sort of way, juggling their bodies up and down like jumping-jacks.

At such times they were always arrayed in buckskin striped in red and yellow and ornamented by bells, feathers, beads and fringes. Each carried a tomahawk in hand and from a cord around his neck were supposed to be hung the scalps he had gathered during the past season. Then, to the great enjoyment of settlers, (to whom such an exhibition was as good as a circus now-a-days,) the dancers would whoop and dance with more fury and noise than pandemonium turned loose.

An imitation "war dance," in which a grand panoramic display of the waving arms and leathery legs of a bewildering constellation of bespangled and revolving savages with flashing knives and red painted tomahawks, usually concluded the performances.

The foregoing are samples of the early Indian experiences in Dixon county. Many other similar stories could be told, but they are as bloodless and scalpless, and of as little importance as these we have related.

In marked contrast to the above trivial, latter day Indian stories, are the tales and legends concerning what happened here a hundred or more years ago.

From such legends it appears that the Indians in the old

days were much more warlike and cruel than those with whom the pioneers of Dixon county had to deal.

The frequent discoveries that have been made in this country of stone arrows, axes and other mementos of the ancient inhabitants have kept alive an interest in the legends which come down through the many years elapsing since the events occurred on which they were founded.

In 1875 while at Niobrara the writer was introduced to an old Scotchman named McFarline who had lived nearly all his life as a hunter and scout among the tribes west of the Missouri, and was acquainted in a great degree, with their languages, customs and traditions. Before Dixon county was settled by the whites, Mr. McFarline had frequently been here, and this region was therefore familiar to him. He said the last time he was in Dixon county, about forty years before, he accompanied a small party of Brule Sioux who came with the purpose of trapping and hunting, and if occasion offered, of stealing a few horses from the Ponca Indians. He said that at that time this country was beautiful though wild and uncultivated. It was with great pleasure that he talked of the wonderful changes which had taken place since that time.

Among several curious stories of tribes formerly here McFarline related the history of a certain blood-thirsty chief, Mish-te-ne-wah by name, and of his numerous wars and raids upon surrounding tribes. It appears that at the commencement of this century and doubtless during many long years before, the country embraced within the counties of Northern Nebraska along the river, was densely settled by Indians. In Dixon county were several very large Indian towns. One of the most extensive was located in the fine valley of the Daily and had a large population. Doubtless Messrs. Addison, Sherman, Thomas and others whose farms are within those old Indian grounds, often find such mementos as arrow heads, stone axes, pipes, etc.

At the place where the Daily intersects South Creek, near the spot where Martinsburg now is, there was another Indian town, a smaller place, however, than the other. Three miles this side there was still another village, which in an unlucky hour for it was destroyed, and all its inhabitants—Indians, squaws and papposes to the last one

were killed and scalped by a raiding band of Chippeways. The mound marking the resting place of these unfortunates, is still to be seen.

There was also an Indian village occupying the ground where Ponca is. Another was about three miles east and down the valley; and along the bluffs on the north were several more. One of these, quite a large town, was on the farm of Joseph Brewer. Near where Ionia was, were two villages, one of them as large as the town in the Daily valley.

The tough old chief Mish-te-ne-wah above alluded to, lived in the Indian town in Daily valley. It was his capital city and was about eighteen miles west of where Ponca now is, and its only monument is the one great tree of the valley. There he ruled supreme over a large force of warriors. When the spirit moved him to do so, he marched out his fighting men and made fearful raids upon the more peaceful tribe along the river near Ponca. Mish-te-ne-wah was a skillful hand in the fighting and strategical business and was therefore generally successful in his battles, taking large numbers of scalps and conveying home a numerous company of prisoners who went with the comfortable assurance of being burnt at the stake on their arrival.

But finally Mish-te-ne-wah came to grief. He came down one night with a band of warriors, when a large party of Indian hunters went for the marauders and hemming them into one of the ravines between Ponca and the river captured or killed the whole crowd.

Those who were taken prisoners were tied to stakes, wood piled around them and various interesting ceremonies were gone through with, the crowning feature of which was the torturing and burning of the captives, who sang bravely their war songs until the flames choked them off. Among the thirty or forty who were captured and burned was the warlike Mish-te-ne-wah.

The place where they had their threads of life burned off was, according to Mr. McFarlane, about a mile northerly from Ponca. This was in a measure corroborated a few years ago by exploring a mound on the farm then owned by Mr. F. Comad. There, on one of the high bluffs which overlook the Missouri, is a mound of circular form about twenty

feet in diameter and ten feet in height. Its appearance indicates that it was constructed by human hands, and a few years ago N. S. Porter and others investigated it to see what it contained. The ground was packed down very hard, so hard that it was almost as impenetrable as rock. With great difficulty and labor, the explorers with pickaxes and spades were enabled to excavate a hole from the top of the mound downward about eight feet and some four feet across. They were rewarded by finding the bones of numerous human skeletons.

These skeletons showed that those buried there were of great size, the skulls were large but thin and the jaw bones were powerful and armed with tremendously strong double teeth. With these bones they found a quantity of charcoal. The skeletons had been placed side by side in a sitting position and fronting the north. With them no beads, pipes or weapons were found, thus showing that the occupants of the mounds had been deprived of their weapons and ornaments before burial.

It is not unlikely that this was the place of torture and burial of Mish-te-ne-wah and his band. The presence of the charred wood indicated that they were here tortured by fire. That they met their death by violence and were buried without the respect which Indians always bestow upon their friends is shown by the ignominious manner of their burial.

When Indians bury their friends they place in the graves with them their pipes, beads, weapons, etc., in order to give them a suitable outfit to start business in the next world. But in this case not an arrow or bead was bestowed upon them, nor even a pipe with which to enliven the journey to the happy hunting grounds.

And from the manner in which the Indians were placed it would seem that those who buried them did not propose they should ever get to the happy hunting grounds at all. Their faces were turned to the north, away from the sun, in which condition according to ancient Indian theology, the spirit is supposed to always grope in darkness, thereby rendering the chances of success in finding the Indian paradise very doubtful indeed. This is the Indian method of cruelty beyond the grave.

## CHAPTER VI.

COURTS AND CRIMES IN DIXON COUNTY IN 1870— INDIANS BROUGHT BEFORE THE DISTRICT COURT FOR THE MURDER OF MUNSON IN WAYNE COUNTY— THE COURT OF JUDGE LYNCH, AND THE TRIAL AND CONVICTION OF MAT MILLER FOR THE MURDER OF MR. DUNN— MYSTERIOUS FATE OF JAMES BIGLEY.

For several years after the county was organized, people were too busy and law abiding to have many lawsuits. Once a year a term of district court would be held but there were few cases to try, disputes having generally been settled by friendly arbitration. About the only use of court week was to give to grand and petit jurors, witnesses, sheriff and spectators an opportunity to rest from their labors, renew old acquaintances and enjoy a sociable day or two. Discussions as to the crops, the increase of improvements and population and the chances of candidates for county office were held of more interest than the consideration of any civil or criminal docket.

About the only important criminal case ever before the district court of the county up to 1870 was that of five Winnebagos who had been arrested for murder. The crime was not committed in Dixon county, but in Wayne, then attached to Dixon for judicial purposes. From the evidence it appeared that one C. S. Munson in the early part of the summer of 1870, while at work on his claim near Plum Creek, Wayne county, was attacked, killed and scalped by the five young Indians in question. They killed him and took his scalp, not especially on account of malice but because they wished to obtain a "brave" reputation with the tribe. They were caught on the Winnebago reservation soon after, and in August, Sheriff Dewitt brought them to Ponca for trial.

On the day court was held, two hundred Winnebagos arrived in town to protect the interest of their five arrested brethren, and whether or not Judge Crouse deemed it un-



healthy to proceed with the trial he transferred the case to Washington county. They were accordingly taken there by sheriff. On the route he was waylaid twice by armed bands of several hundred Winnebagos who insisted on the release of the prisoners, but his firmness kept them at bay. It was only fear of future consequences that saved him on that occasion of being scalped himself. However, he successfully stood them off and went through all right. The prisoners were afterwards tried at Blair and convicted and sent to the penitentiary. The evidence that convicted them was a scalp which was found in one of their tepees and which was identified as Munson's by a peculiar scar or mark. One of the prisoners was afterwards reprieved and the others died in prison.

But while a case of murder had never been tried before the district court of Dixon county, there was in 1870 a trial of that kind in the court of Judge Lynch.

In July of that year the county was excited by a tragedy within its borders, and for a short time the Arcadian pursuits of peace were laid aside and the citizens became stern and relentless judges.

An account of the murder and of the swift and effectual manner in which justice was administered will be interesting to remember. This prompt method of settling with the criminal, in which no delays, new trials nor appeals were allowed to defeat the ends of justice, did more thereafter to make wrongdoers avoid the county than a whole bench of big wigged judges and lawyers could do. For several years afterwards, if a man wanted to commit murder or steal a horse, he was careful to see that it was done outside Dixon county lines.

On the 1st day of July, 1870, an old gentleman named Dunn started from his home in Clinton, Iowa, on a visit to Northern Nebraska. Mr. Dunn was a farmer and not very well off financially, and his desire to provide a home for his family induced him to make a journey to Nebraska, designing to purchase a farm if the country suited him.

Mr. Dunn, by those who knew him in Iowa, is said to have been an honest and exemplary man and respected in the community where he lived. When he left Clinton, he told his wife that he would be absent about a month. He

wished, he said, to see Dixon county, of which he had heard favorable reports, and if the land was as good and cheap as represented, he would buy a farm and in a month's time would be back after his family. Thus with cheerful anticipations he set out on his journey.

Mr. Dunn's western trip, until he reached Sioux City, was by railroad. There he found further progress would have to be made on foot or by stage. In those days there was not, as now, a railroad between Sioux City and Ponca and the best a traveler could do was to take the stage which made two trips per week. If the traveler did not in his movements hit the starting time of the stage, he would either have to remain in Sioux City until its next trip, three days, or provide some other means of conveyance. When Mr. Dunn arrived in Sioux City he learned that the up-country stage had left the morning before.

In as costly a stopping place as Sioux City was, the thought of staying there two or three days was discouraging to him. He would have immediately set out on foot, but hesitated thus entering a sparsely settled country which he was wholly unacquainted with. Fortunately, as it seemed to him, he met a young man who said he lived in Dixon county and was expecting to go there the next day. He said he would go on foot, and he offered if Mr. Dunn desired, to conduct him to Ponca.

Mr. Dunn gladly accepted the friendly offer, and on the next day, July 3, the two crossed the river to Covington and started on their walk toward Ponca, twenty-five miles distant. The companion of Mr. Dunn was a young man about twenty-two years of age. In size he was yet a mere boy, having a slight form and a thin, beardless face which, however, bore the marks of dissipation. He said his name was Mat Miller.

They left Covington before noon and at three o'clock had progressed on their trip as far as the little town of Jackson. Here they rested a short time, and then again started on their road. As they journeyed along Mr. Dunn appeared much pleased with the country which he then saw for the first time. In his unsuspecting honesty he did not hesitate to tell his youthful companion that the object of his visit was to buy a home for himself and family, and he made

many inquiries as to the quality of land, the price per acre, the climate, society, schools and churches. Thus in friendly inquiries and conversation the tedium of their walk was worn away.

Half an hour before sundown they came to a little stream, Badger Creek, which crossed their road about three miles from Ponca. On the bank of this rivulet the weary travelers saw with pleasure a cool and inviting thicket of timber, and entering its refreshing shade they sat down to rest a few moments before completing the remainder of their journey.

From the timber, so pleasant and inviting to a man worn by a twenty mile tramp over hot and dusty roads, scarcely a sign of life was visible on all the surrounding landscape; not a cultivated field could be seen nor habitation excepting one homesteader's cabin on a distant hill.

The road which Mr. Dunn and young Miller had followed was not in those days much traveled. To the homesteader's family in their cabin on the hill it was an event worthy of notice and mention, when they saw the accustomed solitude disturbed by passing travelers. On this occasion the family saw the two footmen, (one of whom they recognized as a young man whom they had seen in Ponca) long before they reached the thicket of timber. They saw them plod wearily along and when they reached the timber, saw them enter. In half an hour afterwards and just as the sun was going down, they saw the young man, Mat Miller come out. The other man was not with him. Miller pursued his way towards Ponca.

Twenty-five years ago, Ponca was not as large a town as at present nor was it blessed with its present bustle and business. Two or three stores provided for the town and county, a single tavern fed and bedded the few who came in from abroad and a single saloon invited the thirsty to enter. Of these several institutions, it is probable the saloon did the greatest business. It was kept by a man, whose son, Mat Miller, had become very reckless and dissipated. He often absented himself from home and devoted his time to the lowest and vilest haunts of Sioux City. During these expeditions he had fallen under the influence of one of the abandoned sirens of that city. He was infatuated with her.

and she by her seductive wiles not only led him far away from honor, but took what money he could beg from his father or steal from others. On his last visit to his charmer, she had warned him that if he expected farther favors and friendship from her he must bring her more money, a big pile, in fact, or else, to use the expressive language of the bagnio, she would "shake him."

On the evening of the day when Mr. Dunn and Mat Miller journeyed on foot towards Ponca, old man Miller, the saloon keeper, was roused from the contemplation of his row of bottles and the drinkable treasures they contained by the arrival of his son. "Hello Mat" and "Hello dad," were all the salutations which, in no very gracious manner, passed between the pair. Mat went to the bar and helped himself to some of his father's strongest poison, and then turning to the old man told him that he was going away "for good," and if he had any money to give him before he left, he wanted it for he was going the very next day. His father answered Mat by a surly refusal to give him money then or ever. "I don't care," retorted Mat, "I have more money than you have, and I could buy and sell you twice over." So saying he drew from his pocket a large roll of bills and exultingly displayed them before the old man's eyes. "There is what I've got since I've been gone" continued Mat, "and I can do it again, and I don't ask any odds of such an old fool as you are." "How you earned it," replied his father, "I don't know, but I should think in the butcher business, for your bills are all blood and so are your shirt sleeves."

A thirsty customer now entering the saloon for his evening bitters, put an end to this interesting conversation between father and son. But though the conversation ended, what had been said and the unusual spectacle of a roll of bills in the hands of Mat Miller had been fastened upon the memory of the only spectator of the scene, old Dan Foley, an honest but chronically befuddled toper, who, half drunk, but not too drunk to see and hear, reclined on a bench in the corner. As the customer entered, Mat hastened to put the money out of sight, and soon after left the saloon.

The next day was the 4th of July and was duly kept and honored at Ponca by the people of that town and vicinity.

Matt did not go away that day, as he had declared he would, but remained, and no doubt, as far as his blood stained conscience would permit, participated in the enjoyments of the occasion. In the evening a grand ball wound up the festivities and Mat was one of the fiddlers, and, to use the words of one who was there, "fiddled all night without dropping a note or missing a drink."

The next morning before "sun up" Mat left town. He was noticed going towards Ponca landing, a mile north on the river, and from that time forward he was seen there no more, until he was returned to participate in scenes of wonderful interest and excitement. It was afterwards learned that when Mat left, he crossed the river and went down on the Dakota side to Sioux City where he gladdened with gifts of money and jewelry the heart of his painted doxy, and soon after, accompanied by her, he journeyed to Council Bluffs and there among kindred spirits scattered money right royally.

The same day Mat Miller left Ponca, a hunter made a discovery in the thicket of timber previously mentioned. It was a dead man whom he saw lying there. The head was beaten almost to a jelly, the throat was cut from ear to ear and the body had as many as twenty stabs. In the pool of blood surrounding the corpse, were seen the club and knife which had been used to complete the cruel work. The club was the hickory cane which Mr. Dunn had carried.

When a murder is committed in a law-abiding community, it naturally creates far greater excitement and indignation than it would in localities where such crimes are of frequent occurrence. Here was a murdered man, who, when due investigation was made by the coroner's jury and on examination of the papers discovered on the body, was found to be Mr. Dunn whose arrival in Ponca had been expected for ten days past by those with whom he had corresponded in relation to purchasing land. That he had been murdered for his money there could be no doubt. Who had done this damnable deed? Evidence was immediately forthcoming. There were those who remembered seeing Mr. Dunn and Mat Miller leave Covington on foot together. At Jackson their presence was recalled. The homesteader's family saw them enter the thicket together, and soon after-

wards saw Mat go away alone. The bloody knife was recognized as one which Mat had bought at a store in Ponca a few weeks before. Old Dan Foley cudged his alcoholic brain and brought out what he had seen and heard when Mat and his father had their talk in the saloon. From all this evidence, the conclusion was inevitable that Mat Miller was the red hauded criminal.

Then eager enquiries were made for him. There was extreme anxiety that he be punished. Here was a man who had been struck down while coming to be one of the good citizens of the county. Anger excited every breast and the whole community burned with a desire to see that such swift, retributive justice be done to the murderer, that in all future time the memory of it would protect others from a similar violence. But where was Mat Miller?

Sheriff Dewitt hunted for him. His inquiries tracked him to Sioux City. From there he followed his trail to Council Bluffs, and there, riotously squandering the money of his victim, the sheriff found him.

On the 23rd day of July, Sheriff Dewitt brought Mat Miller in irons back to Ponca. Then the people of the county, impelled by the stern determination to see justice done without delay, assembled and took Mat from the sheriff, and before a self-organized and orderly tribunal, held in a church and presided over by a minister of the gospel, tried him for his crime.

Mat confessed his guilt. He related to the people that when resting in the thicket of timber with Mr. Dunn, the thought first came into his mind to kill him.

He said he wanted money for the girl he loved in Sioux City. If he had money, she would go away with him where they could always live together. If he did not get money she threatened to discard him. As he thus reasoned to himself he drew his knife and attacked his victim. He stabbed him repeatedly and lest those terrible wounds were not enough to kill him, cut his throat and crushed his head with a club. Then without remorse he robbed the body, and bore away the harvest of money he had acquired.

This was substantially his confession. A vote was taken by the great jury of 500 people assembled in the church, whether the criminal should be punished by hanging. Al-

most unanimously that question was decided in the affirmative. Whereupon the reverend presiding officer, who had opened the investigation with prayer and had conducted the proceedings with solemnity and decorum, now sentenced the criminal to death. The prisoner was placed in a wagon and immediately taken to the western end of town for execution.

The gallows consisted of three scantlings joined at the top. The wagon was driven beneath, the rope adjusted to the prisoner's neck and the wagon drawn from under him. His neck was not broken and hence his sufferings must have been great. At the end of thirty minutes it was announced he was dead. The body was then taken down, placed in a coffin and removed to the church where, an hour before, the trial had been held. The next morning it was buried.

Several months after the summary trial and hanging of Mat Miller there were vague rumors bearing on his case. One was that by the skill of doctors he had after his hanging been brought back to life again. Another rumor was to the effect that it was known to at least four of those who attended the burial, that instead of the body of Mat Miller it was a coffin of brick which was interred. Still another rumor was listened to and believed by some, that he had been seen on the Omaha reservation. One night, a few years after the hanging, a citizen insisted that he saw him on the streets of Ponca.

All these rumors were, however, found to be ill founded. To settle the question, a number of citizens opened Mat Miller's grave and were convinced that it was Mat himself, and not a coffin of brick, which had been buried.

Such is the history of Mat Miller's crime, trial and hanging. That he deserved the fate he received none will deny. And in view of usual court proceedings in criminal cases, can we not believe that the services of Judge Lynch are sometime necessary.

It was thought by some of the old settlers that the murder of Mr. Dunn was not the first crime of the kind which Mat Miller had been concerned in. In 1869 James Bigley and his brother, William Bigley, and W. D. Long were keeping a grocery store in Ponca. One day in the fall, James

Bigley went to Sioux City to get some repairs for a threshing machine and also to pay \$400 to Booge & Co. for goods for the store.

At Sioux City in the evening, Bigley was seen on the streets by several who knew him, and an old friend, Fitzgibbons, who lived in Sioux City, desired him to go home with him and stay over night but he refused.

Next morning Bigley was missing. His coat and hat were found on the steamboat Miner which was lying there, but he was never found, and from that day to this his fate has been a matter of mystery and conjecture. Among the many rumors, it was said that he was seen that evening with Mat Miller and a fellow called "Fiddler Jim," and that they killed and robbed him at a house near Perry Creek and after the murder put the coat and hat on the steamboat as a blind. Whether there was any truth in the story it is now impossible to say. Mr. Bigley was a good citizen, upright in his dealings and beneficial to the community where he lived.



## CHAPTER VII.

STORY OF A RASCALLY LITTLE RAILROAD — THE COVINGTON,  
COLUMBUS AND BLACK HILLS NARROW GAUGE ENTERPRISE  
— ITS RISE AND CAREER — ITS EXPLOITS IN FINANCES AND  
BUILDING AND ITS FINAL SALE BY A RECEIVER.

Old settlers of the county remember the general anxiety, twenty-five years ago, to have railroad connection with the outside world. In 1869 the so-called St. Paul and Nebraska Railroad company had offered to build such a road if bonds were voted to aid the enterprise. The project fell through and for several years thereafter railroad building here was dormant. But as time went on and the need of such a road grew more urgent, citizens seemed willing to do most anything by way of aid could they but see the cars rolling into Dixon county.

In July, 1873, their hopes were aroused for a short time by the announcement that the St. Paul and Nebraska Company would that year build from Sioux City to Jackson, twelve miles, and from there to some point in Dixon county. All this was, however, mere talk; the St. Paul and Nebraska Company could not out of its own funds have built a rod of road. It was supposed by many to be simply a scheme to make a stake out of Dakota and Dixon counties.

In 1874, discoveries of gold in the Black Hills and the great rush of people to that point increased the railroad fever. Dixon county was on the route then followed from Sioux City to the Hills and it seemed reasonable that the long desired road would now come. Nor were people mistaken. In 1875 several capitalists or pretended capitalists whose lack of funds was compensated by hardness of cheek, came together at Sioux City and concocted the "Covington, Columbus and Black Hills railroad" scheme. It was proposed to build a road commencing at Covington, and running west through Dakota, Dixon, Cedar and Knox counties.

and from thence by one branch to the Hills and by another to Columbus, there making connection with the Union Pacific. The name given to the proposed road, "the Covington, Columbus & Black Hills" expressed the points of departure and termination.

After the scheme had been fully prepared, the men in charge of it devoted several months to soliciting aid from several counties. At a meeting of the county commissioners of Dixon county, held November 24, 1875, a committee of smooth and plausible men, mainly of Sioux City, headed by J. B. Hubbell of Mankato, Minn., appeared and submitted their proposition, which in substance was as follows:

If Dixon county will donate to the Covington, Columbus & Black Hills Railroad Company, \$87,000 in the coupon bonds of said county, dated January 1, 1876, payable in twenty years, with interest semi-annually at the rate of ten per cent per annum, said company will build a railroad from Covington, Nebraska, to and through said county, upon the most practicable route east and west.

When said railroad is graded to the center section line of range five, the builders shall have \$20,000 of said bonds, and when the road is completed from Covington into the county three miles, and trains running, the company will receive the remainder of the bonds.

The grading to said center section line to be completed within a year, and the completion of the three miles into the county, within fifteen months from November 24, 1875.

After due consideration, the county commissioners, Messrs. O. P. Sullenberger, W. H. Clark and J. Martin, determined to submit the proposition to the voters and for that purpose ordered an election held December 27, 1875. At such election five hundred and seventy-two votes were cast, of which four hundred and sixty were for railroad bonds, and one hundred and twelve against, thereby carrying the proposition by more than a two-thirds vote.

The C. C. & B. H. Co. made similar propositions to Dakota county on the east and to the counties of Cedar and Knox on the west, all of which voted the bonds asked for.

On April 20, 1876, the company commenced at Covington to grade their road, and pushed it forward with vigor, hoping to reach Ponca by July 4, that town having been decided by the company to be on the best and most practicable route. The road was not built into the county as soon

as July 4, but in September it was completed and cars running between Covington and Ponca, and the grading finished to the center section line of range five, and thereupon the bonds were turned over to the company, \$20,000, on September 16th, and \$67,000 on September 22; total \$87,000.

But though the letter of the contract had been complied with so the commissioners could not refuse to turn over the bonds to the company, yet the road had not been completed in good faith and according to the implied understanding.

The amount of bonds donated, justified the people in believing they were to have a road of standard guage, solidly built, and with the best kind of ties and iron. Instead of that, fraud seemed to be written all over it. A little contemptible affair, with a three and a half foot guage and constructed throughout with cheap and inferior material and labor. No wonder people were disappointed and enraged. They had saddled on the county a debt of \$87,000 for a road which could have cost little more than that sum, and the thought naturally arose whether so much fraud and ill faith on the part of the company did not release the county from paying the \$87,000, or any part of it.

In the meanwhile, insignificant as the road would have been in a country where railroads were frequent, its coming gave the county quite a push for a short time. It was supposed there would be more desirable markets for what was bought or sold, that people would come and locate, and that real estate of all kinds would be more in demand and at better prices. These hopes only in a very small measure were realized.

The benefit was trivial compared with what it would have been had the road been of standard guage and first class construction. Grain, cattle and hogs could then have been shipped direct to Chicago without changing cars at Covington or Sioux City.

The fact was, the cost of sending a car of cattle or produce to Sioux City over the narrow guage and then changing to a car of standard guage was fully as great as it was to send them by wagon in the old fashioned way. Hence aside from the amusement of seeing the little engine and rattle trap train of cars creep out in the morning and creep in at night, one hardly saw any great benefit therefrom and

especially a benefit equivalent to the gift of \$87,000. When people thought of these matters, and reflected how gross and expensive a swindle it had been to them, how much had been paid and how little received, their indignation grew until almost uncontrollable.

In the spring of 1877 the work of grading west of Ponca, was resumed. Grading was pretended to be done to the west side of the county and from there to the center of Cedar county and a certain amount of work had to be done before such bonds could be claimed. Fortunately for Cedar county, a sensible mob assembled one day at St. Helena and seized the bonds amounting to \$150,000 and made a bonfire of them. Thus that county was saved the grief and expense of a big suit in the United States Court.

Knox county had also the good fortune and good sense to destroy their bonds. Towards fall the company began to feel hard up. There were no more counties to plunder of bonds and hence no more bonds to sell. Men who had worked on the grade for the company, clamored for their pay.

As to the road as far as it was built and operated, it did not pay expenses. Sometimes a run would be made between Ponca and Covington without a single passenger or pound of freight and nine times out of ten there were not over three or four passengers. Not a very prosperous outlook, certainly, for the railroad company.

Towards the fall of 1877 the company had a new general manager, one Davenport, who was said to be as remorseless an old scoundrel as ever struck the country. So unpopular did he become in a short time with the workmen that he was in danger of personal violence. Once it was rumored he had been shot by a grader who could get no pay for his work, and it was said by one who had more wit than sympathy, that the rumor was circulated for the purpose of raising the market value of the company's stock.

At one time several hundred unpaid men who had been working on the grade west of New Castle were at Covington waiting for their pay. Either by some knot of red tape or with hopes of wearing them out, the crowd of men were kept dancing attendance from day to day, all on expense, many of them wholly destitute and actually suffering for

the necessaries of life, waiting for the wages due them, and as it appeared, waiting in vain. The feelings of the crowd seemed exceedingly vindictive towards General Manager Davenport. One day a hungry but resolute looking individual made the following brief remarks: "We are here after our pay and we are going to have it, you bet. If we don't get it, we'll help the devil to foreclose his mortgage on old Davenport." With these words he made a horrible grimace and putting his hand on his throat stuck out his tongue and pointed significantly to a tree near by.

Another story which was told and which helped to excite the wide spread indignation was: A man had worked two months on the grade in Cedar county. His wife and children were in Sioux City. To them he sent the vouchers he had received for his work and his wife went to the office of the C. C. & B. H. Company to get the money. The general manager listened to her request with insolent indifference and gruffly told her he had no money for her. She told him of the destitution of herself and family and implored him to pay a part at least. She offered to let him have the vouchers for her husband's work for five dollars. She offered them for \$3; for \$2; for \$1.50. To all her appeals she merely received a grunt of disapproval, and the poor woman retired from the presence of that dignitary in tears and despair.

Such are samples of the numerous stories of injustice which were told of the C. C. & B. H. Company. It is said that hundreds were kept out of their earnings, in fact were never paid, and that not the slightest effort was made by the company to meet its obligations or to relieve the distress of the defrauded workmen. There were in that company two or three honorable men, but they were in the minority and to them these criticisms do not refer.

In September an application was made to Judge Dillon of the United States Court to place the road in the hands of a receiver. The application was denied, but the Judge stated that if the company failed to proceed in good faith and without delay in the construction of the road, a receiver would be appointed.

The existence of the company continued longer than any one expected. It struggled, lied and swindled its way along

through the fall, winter and spring and finally in May, 1878, was placed in the hands of Judge Love, of Des Moines, Iowa, as receiver. It was said the company was then indebted for work done on the road to the amount of \$75,000 and that not a dollar of it was ever paid.

From that time forward there was nothing done on the road even to keep it in repair. The worthless cottonwood ties crumbled with old age and rottenness and the rails degenerated into two parallel streaks of rust. The little train trundled up and down between Ponca and Covington every day, on time or off, it mattered little, as it generally carried neither passengers nor freight. It was a worthless fraud and had been from the start.

Finally to the joy of everybody, it was, in October, 1879, sold by order of the United States Court to the corporation now known as the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha R. R. Company and in a few months a great change for the better took place. The track was widened to standard guage, new ties and rails replaced the wretched cottonwood sticks and worthless strap iron and the bridges and road bed were reconstructed. From a roaring and costly farce the road soon became and has since continued one of the best in the state. The ancient habit of running slow (acquired during the days of the C. C. & B. H., when, it was said, the solitary passenger could hold long conversations with farmers plowing in neighboring fields and only ceased when the plow beat the train,) no longer wears time and patience.

As to the \$87,000, action was commenced against the county in the United States Circuit Court in 1878 and was afterwards appealed to the Supreme Court of the United States and there in 1884 was finally decided in favor of the county. Thus freed from claims and out of debt the county could joyfully admit the truth of the maxim that "all is well that ends well."

In this effort to extort from Dixon county \$87,000 for three miles of pocket railroad, it was believed that some of the leading business men of Sioux City had much to do, and had played a part as shameless as that of Shylock in his resolve to cut out the heart of Antonio. Whether the belief was well founded or not, it created a distrust of that city which still continues and will require years to remove.

## CHAPTER VIII.

THE GROWTH OF THE COUNTY CONTINUED — THE SOUTH HALF OF THE COUNTY COMMENCES SETTLING UP — MARTINSBURG STARTED IN 1872 — BLIZZARDS AND LOSS OF LIFE IN 1872 — GRASSHOPPERS IN 1874, 1875 AND 1876 — THE BLACK HILLS EXCITEMENT OF 1875 AND THE C. C. & B. H. R. R. — THE INCREASE IN SIZE AND BUSINESS OF PONCA, MARTINSBURG AND NEW CASTLE — THE EARTHQUAKE OF 1877 — FIRST STEPS TOWARD AN AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY — TERRIBLE PRAIRIE FIRES IN MARCH 1879.

During the years in which the C. C. & B. H. R. R. Co. troubles, briefly related in the last chapter, were foremost in the minds of citizens, the county was gradually increasing in wealth and population. There were occasional short crops, especially during the grasshopper years of 1874 and 1875, but otherwise the general prosperity of the county was all that could be expected.

Before 1869 the southern half of the county had been almost entirely unsettled, and in a very large proportion of the balance of the county, there was much vacant land. In '69, '70 and '71, the region of country now known as Wakefield, Logan, Emerson, Concord, Springbank and Daily townships, began to grow in citizens and improvements.

The first white settlers of Wakefield and Logan townships came there in 1869. As the years went by their numbers were slowly added to. Springbank had previously but a handful of settlers, but in that year and afterwards had many. To Daily in '70 and '71 came a large number; and Clark had its first resident in 1871. Galena, which had already had a few residents, made rapid increase in 1870 and following years. The same may also be said of Silver Creek, Hooker, Ionia, Otter Creek and Ponca townships. Emerson, Wakefield and Logan did not for several years grow as

rapidly as the other townships we have named. Though having excellent land and presenting unusual attractions, the lack of markets and railroad facilities kept them in the background in a great measure until 1881 when the Norfolk branch of the St. Paul railroad was built through them.

The healthy increase in population from and after 1870 is seen by figures. In the summer of 1870 the number was 1,345, and in 1875, 2,886, a gain of over 20 per cent each year. New farms and improvements were more and more seen as time went on and occasionally a new post office, mill or small center of trade would be started.

Martinsburg, a pleasant and prosperous village in Galena township was founded by Jonathan Martin in 1872. It is situated at the junction of South and Daily Creeks and near the center of the county, and being surrounded by a wide area of rich farming land, and having an excellent water power it was thought it would develop into a successful rival of Ponca for county seat honors. In 1873 a grist mill was built by Mr. Martin which was soon after destroyed by a freshet and was the next year rebuilt. Other branches of business were also soon after started, a store, hotel, blacksmith shop, etc., and several dwelling houses. Afterwards in 1875, an effort was made to remove the county seat to Martinsburg, and at the election held, October 12, of that year to decide the question, that town came within about a dozen votes of winning the prize. A second unsuccessful attempt to remove the county seat to that place was made a few years later. It will so continue to result until Martinsburg is connected with other places by railroad, when it will probably become one of the most important towns in the county.

During the interval of 1870 and 1875 the growth of Ponca village was small, although it was the principal trading point for a large extent of country and did a good business. But it lacked railroad facilities and hence could not expect to be a desirable market town. When the narrow gauge railroad project was started, Ponca as well as a large part of the county were strongly in favor of it. It came as has been seen, but it was of little benefit until it fell into better hands several years afterwards.



Dixon county and especially in the southern half of it where there were no hills and timber to give protection, was noted in an early day for its tremendous prairie fires in the spring and summer and for its blizzards in the winter. In the northern part where the country was rougher and the grass less luxuriant, fires were generally kept under control. But in the southern valleys and great stretches of unbroken and nearly level land covered by a dense growth of dry and inflammable grass, with neither trees or hills to ward off the wind, a fire once started swept everything before it with irresistible power. In later years it has been different. Groves and plowed fields subdue the fury of fire and wind and settlers with ordinary care can feel secure.

As to blizzards, they were worse in the unprotected level lands of the southern part of the county. A blizzard swept the county February 12, 1872, and was especially terrible in the Logan valley. On the morning of that day, Joseph Bolsom (who lived in the southeast corner of what is known as Concord township and who came there in 1871) went with G. W. Packer of Logan to Graves' grove on South Creek, two miles away, to get wood. The day was clear and no hint was given of a coming storm. They went to the grove, each with a team and sled, and had loaded up and started for home, Bolsom in advance, when the blizzard struck them. It was impossible to see the road or each other and each had to guess his way through the storm as best he could. Packer went through to Hind's house in Logan all right, arriving there late in the afternoon. He felt no anxiety for Bolsom whom he supposed had also made a safe trip home. The next morning the air was again clear and still, and Packer saw Bolsom's team standing in the valley half a mile away, no one near them. Packer hastened down to see what the trouble was and found Bolsom lying on the ground near the sled, nearly covered by snow and frozen stiff. It was supposed that he had been wandering around nearly all night before finally succumbing to the storm. During the same blizzard, old man "Austin" as he was called, who since 1869 had lived near the Taft post office a few miles from Logan, went about six miles to get wood on the Winnebago reservation, and was lost in the storm and perished.

One day in February of the next winter, Henry Harden, who lived near the Bolson place went with his sleigh and horses to see a neighbor, Spaulding, who lived a mile distant. He was accompanied by his grandson, a boy twelve years old. While at Spaulding's place a blizzard came up and Harden and his grandson made a start for home. Neither was ever again seen alive and Harden was never seen at all. Two days after, the sleigh was found and in it the boy frozen to death. The horses had there become detached from the sleigh, and as their tracks showed, they went with the storm and in the direction of the reservation. There they were found afterwards. Mr. Harden was never found.

The first death in the county of a white man by freezing was that of Daniel Doulin and occurred February 13, 1866. He had been to Sioux City and on his return was caught by a blizzard and perished within a mile of home. He lived in Galena, a short distance from where Martinsburg now is, removing there in 1856 from Iowa.

Such are among the blizzard experiences of the early settlers and probably are the worst. Lives were not often lost though there were many narrow escapes.

As the prosperous years went by, settlers hardly ever thought of the grasshopper raid of 1857 or reflected that the 'hoppers were liable to come again. From this forgetfulness they were awakened one day in the summer of 1873, by the arrival of a small cloud of them from the northwest which came down upon the fields and gardens. They remained but a short time and did little damage. They gave notice, however, that they still continued on earth and as was afterwards seen were the trivial advance guard of an innumerable host the year after.

In the east, the destructive western grasshopper is hardly known, but here their appearance heralds annihilation to every growing crop. The abiding home of these raiders is on the high, dry plateaus of New Mexico and Arizona and the foot hills of the Rocky Mountains. There they multiply with astonishing rapidity and become so numerous to subsist, and then like bees, they swarm and migrate to other countries. They go with the wind, flying until hunger brings them down, and then woe to the field they alight on.

From their home in the mountains they do not all go at one time nor to one place. They become widely separated after starting, but in almost any case, whether the grand army or some principal detachment, they are as the sands of the sea, myriads of millions. Coming in the distance they look like a light cloud rapidly riding on the wind, and under the blazing noon day sun they glitter like snow flakes, extending from near the ground to the height of half a mile. When they drop down to feed, every green thing is covered in a minute and they sweep everything eatable before them.

Such was the visitation which Nebraska received from them in the summer of 1874. It was a calamity none could foresee or avoid.

They came in countless myriads, sometimes in such dense clouds as to obscure the sun. The morning of the day they came, the fields promised a great harvest of corn, wheat and vegetables. At noon the hoppers had come in force, the air was full of them, and every stalk of corn and wheat, every tree, every species of vegetation even to the grass was black with them, and when night came nearly every growing crop had been destroyed. Therefore there was nothing of importance raised that year.

Suffering, of course, ensued, and many, fearing a recurrence of the scourge, sold their farms for whatever they could get and left the country. Those who thus made haste to leave, have without doubt often regretted their action. The hoppers came again the next year, (1875) but in less force and in 1876 a few scattering ones only. That was the last of them. Since then scarce one has been seen in Dixon county.

In the spring of 1875, several matters of importance to the county diverted attention from the bad results of the grasshopper raid of the year before. One was the convention to amend the state constitution, and on April 6, S. H. Coats was elected county delegate. Another matter of still greater interest, was the recent discovery of gold in the Black Hills and the rush which then commenced of thousands of adventurers to that country.

On April 16, the first Black Hills party (the Andrews Company, organized at Sioux City and containing seventy-eight men and fifteen wagons) passed through the county on their

way, camping at Ponca their first night out. This was the last town they would see on their trip. This first company was soon followed by many others. It was a long, tedious journey to the "Hills" in those days and accompanied with much danger. There were no railroads to convey them and no towns on the route to receive them or furnish supplies. The usual time of making a trip was about forty days. It was through a wild country, much of it desert, that the dreary forty days' journey had to be taken. Many became sick and some died on the route from hardship and exposure, and a few were killed by the Indians, who, regarding the Black Hills as sacred Indian ground, did all in their power to drive back or destroy those who were invading it. Being on the main travelled route to the "Hills," was the cause of the invention of the Black Hills Railroad scheme through Dixon county.

After the grasshopper raids were over, the greatest damage being in 1874, and the loss in '75 and '76 not to exceed 5 per cent, the county quickly recovered its usual courage.

The county thus far in its life had been ably conducted by those in charge of its affairs. In the selection of county officers, citizens had looked more to the fitness of the candidates for office than to the political party they belonged to. Hence, from the first, some favorites were democrats and others were republicans and if an incumbent was competent, faithful and popular, he generally held the office as long as he wished, whatever his politics, or even if he had no politics at all.

The non-partisan course thus adopted was one which was judicious. It really matters little as to party in selecting a county officer. If he does his work faithfully and is guided by fairness and honesty, nothing more can reasonably be asked.

During the first few years of the county, the democratic party was much the strongest, although since then that rule has been reversed, yet the proportion of democrats elected to county office was no greater, considering their number, than that of the republicans. As the county became older, party lines were more strictly observed, yet always, even to this time, the ability and personal popularity of a nominee for county office, is more regarded than his politics.

In 1875 the board of commissioners had submitted to them the proposition of the C. C. & B. H. R. R. Co. to build their road into the county if \$87,000 in bonds were donated, and the election to decide the question resulted in favor of it. The history of this swindle we have given. Suffice it here to say, the road was pushed along by its managers, and entered Ponca in September, 1876, with cheek and assurance, and with an extended hand for the \$87,000.

Being narrow guage, its arrival did not help the county as much as had been expected. Really, aside from the name of having a railroad, it was practically of little value. It was as cheap to carry passengers or produce to Sioux City by wagon as it was by rail.

In Ponca several hundred village lots were donated to the Railroad Company and a right of way granted through the town. A depot and a few other buildings were erected, and people kept up as good courage as could be expected with an \$87,000 debt staring them in the face.

The coming of the road did not increase the value of or demand for real estate in Ponca or in the county to any great extent. During the fall of '76 a few residences were built and occasionally a business house. However, although the business of the place did not increase much, it was certainly as good as before the road was built. The location of Ponca gave it as in the past, the patronage of a great number of settlers. Aside from the tooting of the whistle of the little railroad train the town moved along much as usual.

Among other improvements in 1876, if it be called an improvement, Ponca was incorporated, and henceforth a board of trustees looked after its streets and sidewalks and controlled its affairs. Ponca had years before been incorporated, but the annual election of village officers had been neglected and finally given up.

In the spring of 1877, Ponca had three general stores, two hardware and two drug stores, one bank, two hotels, a grist mill, harness shop, market, furniture store, lumber yard, grain dealers, insurance and real estate agents, two physicians, five attorneys, etc. The population of the place was claimed to be at that time, about eight hundred.

In the summer and fall, work was slowly going forward on the railroad grade between Ponca and New Castle and from the latter place to the center of Cedar county.

In June, 1877, a cheese factory was started near Ponca by Heydon and Wilbur and run two months. The factory closed August 23, having made in two months 2,000 pounds of cheese. This was one of the first cheese factory experiments in the county.

In the same year Stough and Mikesell built a large brick store on the corner of East and Third streets, two stories high, twenty-eight feet wide, and extending back on East street, eighty feet. This was the first brick business house in Ponca.

The question of having township organization in Dixon county was discussed in the summer and fall, and at the election held November 6, 1877, was voted on. Two hundred and forty-three votes were cast in favor of and two hundred and forty-two votes against it, thus carrying the proposition by a majority of one. It came to nothing, however, for in the January following, the supreme court of the state decided the township organization law inoperative and void.

In 1877, the attention of some of the farmers was turned to the profit of wool growing. In October, Joseph Morton shipped 2,720 pounds of wool to market, and received a good price for it. This was not a great thing, but was a starter.

Martinsburg and New Castle were active in 1877. At Martinsburg, Wright and Lockwood's store and Duren's mill did a large business and a cheese factory and other buildings were contemplated. At New Castle the expected C. C. & B. H. R. R. kept things booming.

At noon, November 15, 1877, the county was shaken by an earthquake, the worst this country had experienced for many years, and for about a minute everything seemed to be on the move. Houses shook and swung, windows and doors clattered, trees and chimneys tottered and wood piles rumbled their logs, and for the time being all nature trembled with rage. The performance was soon over, however, and but little harm occurred except to a few broken windows. At John H. Armstrong's farm in South Creek valley and Rev. Hutchinson's place in Daily the shock was quite severe.

In the same month of the earthquake, though perhaps not occasioned by it, Ponca started its first brass band, the members being Prof. Davis, Guy Wilbur, Lovel Jones, Fred Burroughs, John Stough, Jr., Fred Powers, J. A. Mikesell and J. B. Barnes.

The fuel question was always an important one in Dixon county, and particularly in the southern part where timber was scarce. Hence the announcement in the fall of 1877 that an eighty acre bed of excellent peat had been discovered near Park Hill, (Logan township), excited general attention for a short time. But excitement in this country, whether over coal or peat, are not lasting, people having come to the wise conclusion that there is more warmth in the imagination of the finder of coal or peat than there is in the article found.

On January 1, 1878, the railroad grading was reported to have been completed and bridge piles driven from Ponca to seventeen miles beyond New Castle. Aside from criticizing the railroad and its officers, a more useful subject of thought began to occupy attention. An agricultural society for Dixon county had been favorably thought of for several years by the farmers, and especially that winter. This agitation in favor of an agricultural society resulted the next spring in a mass meeting held, (April 19, 1878) in Ponca, when the preliminary steps toward such a society were taken. A committee was appointed to draft a constitution and by-laws, and report proceedings at an adjourned meeting, May 4. This was done and the constitution and by-laws were accepted. S. I. Hart of South Creek was elected president of the society; L. T. Hill, of Ionia, vice-president; W. W. Atkinson, of Daily Branch, treasurer, and J. U. LaFollette, of Ponca, secretary. Several other meetings were held in the summer but that was substantially all that was done that year in behalf of Dixon county's agricultural society.

At the annual school meeting in Ponca, April 1, 1878, it was voted to build a new school house to cost \$3,000. The house was built by Leech and Todd and was completed in September. A large amount of building was done in 1878 throughout the county. Crops had been good the year before and the present prospects were in every way promising.

As on nearly every previous 4th of July since 1865, that day was duly honored this year. Celebrations were held at Ponca, New Castle and Martinsburg, and patriotism was shown in speeches, music, sociable picnic dinners, dancing and horse racing, winding up with grand displays of fire works in the evening.

Among other improvements, Rev. W. H. Clark built the Silver Ridge Seminary (in Silver Creek township) and opened it for school in July. It was a large building and commodiously arranged for scholars. It was continued several years but was finally given up, not being sufficiently patronized to make it successful.

The year closed with full granaries and corn cribs and good prices for produce of all kinds. Wheat had yielded from twenty to thirty bushels to the acre.

In the latter part of March, 1879, terrible prairie fires occurred and great losses ensued in consequence. On March 18, a fire commencing near Daily Branch, was the prelude to a devastating conflagration which swept over the central part of the county the next day. Under the influence of a hurricane, the fire was irresistible in its course of destruction, jumping roads and creeks with ease and could not be checked by any ordinary fire guards.

About noon David Holmes while fighting fire about half a mile from Martinsburg, was surrounded and fatally burned. He was taken to the hotel at Martinsburg, Drs. Hassen and Rowe were called, yet so shockingly was he burned that he died the next day. Mr. Holmes' farm near Martinsburg was swept of everything combustible, except his house. His stable, hay, horses, etc., were burned, the value of which was about \$700.

The houses of Jud Holmes, Wm. Holmes, D. M. Nelan and Geo. Mattison were also burned and all their contents. Manly Wyman, Geo. Castle and W. C. Smith, lost everything from their farms but the houses.

In the surrounding ocean of flame, it seemed almost a miracle that Martinsburg village was not burned up, and it would have been but for the herculean exertions of the citizens.

Before reaching the vicinity of Martinsburg the fire ran over the farm of Sheriff Jones on Silver Creek, burning cribs



and stables, and hundreds of bushels of wheat, corn and oats. His grove, one of the best in the country and covering six acres, was utterly destroyed; only his house was saved.

The farms of Samuel and Thomas Jones were also visited, burning twelve acres of groves, hay, etc.

The fire swept over several farms of residents of Otter Creek, among whom T. Marron and Mr. Bales had their houses burned, and Mr. Casey lost everything but his house.

On March 29 and 30, there were more fires. In Hooker precinct much property was destroyed. Wm. Bailey, D. D. Griffith, J. W. Johnson, John Cummings, Wm. Pfister and John Powers were the worst sufferers, many of them losing houses, barns, farm machinery, grain, hay and fences. Prairie fires so destructive and uncontrollable never before or since occurred in the county and with ordinary care never may again.

## CHAPTER IX.

THE COAL DISCOVERIES, AND THE UPS AND DOWNS OF MINING IN DIXON COUNTY DURING THE PAST 38 YEARS—THE ALLEGED IMMENSE BEDS OF BLACK DIAMONDS IN THE RIVER BLUFFS AND THE DETERMINED EFFORTS TO FIND THEM HAVE SEDUCTIVE HOPE BEFORE AND BLACK DISAPPOINTMENT FOLLOWING AFTER—EVERY ATTEMPT TO FIND A PAYING VEIN IS A TOTAL FAILURE—“OLD JOE BREWER” AND HIS DISCOVERY OF THE PLESIOSAURUS—HIS MOUND BUILDING THEORIES—THE IONIA VOLCANO AND INDIAN SUPERSTITIONS REGARDING IT.

The brief allusion, a few pages back, to the fuel question and its importance to residents, will remind old settlers that at various times much hope and excitement has been aroused in the county over the alleged discovery of coal. It will be well to give a history of the various efforts to mine for coal since the county was first settled.

In 1857 some of the settlers while examining the river near Ponca landing, discovered cropping out of the base of the bluffs, a thin layer of inferior coal, or more properly, lignite. With the hope that this thin layer would increase in thickness and improve in quality as it extended under the hill, a number of the citizens, among whom were the Stough Brothers and E. M. Bisbee, made efforts in that year to open and work the vein. As they drifted into the bluff, they were for a time encouraged in the hope of developing a rich and valuable mine, the layer of coal becoming thicker and better as they proceeded in.

Where it cropped out at the foot of the bluff, its thickness was but three or four inches. Within, at a distance of thirty feet, the thickness was found to be fifteen inches. The coal at the outset was utterly worthless, and was useful only as a hint and suggestion of a more valuable find farther back under the rocks. The encouraged miners did indeed find

a better quality as they progressed with their drift, but it was, after all, and at the best, but a poor quality of lignite.

In the absence of wood, it would answer as an apology for fuel. But with the abundant timber which this county was blessed with, especially along the river, the alleged coal find was worthless. The greatest thickness of the vein never exceeded eighteen inches, and the coal itself, charged with sulphur, emitted such Stygian and suffocating fumes that few would after one trial ever attempt to burn it again.

Messrs. Stough, Bisbee and others who were engaged in it, finally came to the conclusion that time and money would be foolishly squandered by continuing their coal exploration and so abandoned it.

But the extreme anxiety to find coal in this country and the fear that our supply of timber would fail to meet the constantly increasing demand for it, soon after induced Mr. Bisbee to open another mine a short distance from the first one. He drifted in about sixty feet but found no improvement in thickness and quality. The same dirty and sulphur laden material was met with, and when burned, the same unbearable fumes discouraged further efforts.

Professors Aughey and Hayden, both of whom were noted geologists, visited this locality at about that time (1857) to see the coal of which much had been published, and their decision was that the vein was not, properly speaking, coal.

It was merely lignite, coal in its infancy, and might after ages, become coal. It is safe to say that neither Mr. Bisbee or others desired to wait that length of time to make a paying coal business, and again coal mining was dropped for pursuits which had a nearer profit. So the matter rested awhile.

However, the adverse verdict of Professors Aughey and Heydon was in a measure forgotten after a few years and other confident explorers started in from time to time to try their hands at making a better coal discovery in the bluffs.

In 1874 Joseph Brewer (who the year before, dug out the Plesiosaurus, an account of which will be given in this chapter) dug into the bluff about twenty feet and announced that he had struck a wonderfully thick layer of excellent coal. Much excitement was caused by his report and many

went to see his discovery. They found Mr. Brewer prodding into the same old vein which had been ineffectually labored in years before, and in which he had a thickness of about fifteen inches. What little he was enabled to get out, he had a sale for, but at the price received could barely earn enough to keep famine at bay, and hence in a short time, he too, like the others who had preceded him, flung up the sponge and retired from the business.

In the spring following, (1875) several enthusiastic parties formed a company to open another hole into the bluff in search of coal. One of the company by the name of Wernimont was recently from Eastern Iowa and claimed to be an expert in geology and especially in coal and stated that nearly all his life had been devoted to it.

It was afterwards learned that his labors in that respect had been of a practical nature rather than scientific and that his experience had been previously confined to handling a pick at \$1.50 per day in an Iowa coal bank. But what he lacked in knowledge of geological formations he kept to himself and courageously asserted that Professors Aughey and Heydon were entirely mistaken in disbelieving in the existence of a paying deposit of excellent coal a few hundred feet farther under the bluff.

Accordingly Prof. Wernimont started bravely in, he furnishing the science and labor and the others the money, and in a few weeks had penetrated the bluff to the distance of one hundred and thirty-five feet, the mine being five feet high and six feet wide. In that distance he was never able to get under solid rock, nor did the coal become thicker or better, and it looked after all, as though Profs. Aughey and Heydon might possibly be right and Prof. Wernimont wrong. At the end of one hundred and thirty-five feet, Prof. Wernimont drilled down perpendicularly to the depth of ninety-five feet, when finding nothing and his courage oozing out, his scientific labors were brought to a close.

Soon after this, Mr. Bisbee's ambition to possess a rich coal mine revived again and he commenced to re-open the old mine he had worked in years before. He and his men worked diligently and drifted in about one hundred feet. But like Prof. Wernimont, he found no improvement in the coal. He got out considerable, however, which was sold for

fuel. But as was seen in the former efforts to burn it, the sulphurous smell of it, (suggestive of that torrid country where sulphur is a main article in business) rendered it unfit for use unless one held his nose.

One day while Mr. Bisbee was laboring in his mine, the roof fell upon him and crushed him badly. Not fatally, fortunately, although several months elapsed before he could get around again. This disastrous incident dampened his mining enthusiasm and he quit it like the many explorers and investigators who had gone before him.

Then the coal business took another long rest and the next experience of the kind was in 1880 when a stock company was formed for the purpose of exploring deep down into the bowels of the earth in search of a thicker and better quality of coal than that which had been worked in the bluffs. The company raised the necessary money, purchased an engine and drill, and employed a number of experienced men.

After several months' labor on the Heydon farm a mile west of Ponca, a hole was drilled to the depth of five hundred and seventy-six feet. There it was announced a vein of coal was found, four feet thick. Under the advice of Prof. Aughey the company proceeded on down, expecting to find a still thicker vein within a short distance.

Before finding the thicker vein the drill broke off and was lost in the hole and the labor terminated. As to the alleged four foot vein, it was, on reflection, deemed a matter of doubt whether any coal had been found at all. So much doubt, in fact, that no one felt like contributing money to sink a shaft. Hence this exploration went the same beaten road of former efforts.

Again there was a lull in the coal exploring business but after several years people again forgot their misfortunes and failures in this respect and gave the coal business another trial.

In 1887 a company was formed under the leadership of one Newman, a Cornish miner, so called, and a new drift was made into the river bluffs. The company went into the hill about three hundred and fifty feet, finding the same sort and thickness of coal, no better and no worse, than that which Brewer, Wernimont and the others had found years

before. Hence, in time that effort petered out and the company disbanded.

One would think that after all these numerous failures in which not a single glimmer of hope was given to cheer and encourage, people would have been shy about having anything more to do with coal mining in this vicinity. They were shy for a while, but not for long.

In the fall of 1888 another company was organized and with a diamond pointed core drill, a prospect hole was put down to a depth of seven hundred feet, on a lot in the northern part of Ponca. The core, which was carefully taken out and preserved, showed not the slightest indications of coal. The fact is, there is no coal here as has been conclusively proven by the long series of costly investigations.

Since the failure with the core drill, there have been no farther efforts to date, to hunt out a coal vein. As years go by, however, people may again forget their former bad luck and try it again.

We referred previously in this chapter to the unearthing of the "plesiosaurus" by Mr. Brewer, and a brief account of it and of Mr. Brewer's other discoveries will be interesting.

"Old Joe Brewer" familiar to all in Dixon county twenty years ago, had little education that had not been derived from experience instead of books. He owned what is now the farm of H. I. Brown, two miles northwest of Ponca. There, with a family of fifteen children, Mr. Brewer lived many years. He was a man whose study was nature and whose unfaltering enthusiasm and expectation led him to see wonders in every hill and to expect valuable minerals in the rocks and slopes of every ravine.

His land, which extended to the river a fearful array of bluffs and gorges, was in his belief the place where mound builders many ages ago had lived. He pointed out excavations and artificial mounds which he believed corroborated his conclusions, and exhibited bones and fragments of pottery which he had found. The place where he claimed this ancient city to have been was on the bluffs, and three hundred feet above the Missouri.

From that elevated position a wide view is had in every direction; across the level Dakota land to the north and

for miles up and down the river, and on a clear day the buildings of Sioux City are plainly visible. That this elevated land was the home of mound builders may be doubted, although it is likely that a large Indian village had been located there, a hundred or more years ago.

Along the precipice of rock which bounded the river side of this "mound builders' city," Mr. Brewer devoted much time to exploration. He tried to find gold, silver and other minerals; he also delved for coal, and in 1874 rediscovered the worthless vein which Bisbee and others had before and since tried to make profitable. The only thing which Mr. Brewer ever found in all his explorations which was of value, was a petrified skeleton of some great antediluvian animal, said to be the remains of a plesiosaurs.

One day in the spring of 1873 while passing along at the foot of the precipice, Mr. Brewer noticed that the high water of the river which is ever encroaching and undermining, had caused a large fragment of rock to fall. On examining the place, he observed that an immense skeleton had been in part revealed. It was near the bluff that he found a small part of the fossil protruding, the remainder of it was still covered by the ledge of rocks three hundred feet high. With little idea of what animal it had been or of what value it would be to the scientific world, Mr. Brewer and his sons set to work to dig it out. Had care been used in the excavation, a most valuable petrification would have been obtained. As stated, it was afterwards found to be the petrified bones of a plesiosaurus, the second one that had ever been discovered. Hence if brought to the outer world in as perfect condition as it was found by Mr. Brewer it would have been a most important discovery. But the digging it out was nearly the ruin of it. With crow bar and pick axe and careless indifference whether one broke the rock or the fossil, the diggers were as destructive as a bull in a china house. So that when the bones were all dug out they were broken into a hundred pieces. Yet, badly as the breaking was, the immense pile of bones showed that the animal had been one of the most enormous of the ancient denizens of the earth.

The bones were sold soon after by Mr. Brewer to some parties residing in Covington and they removed them to

Sioux City, and the bones thus badly broken were after much labor cemented together again.

The size of the petrification could now be better seen. Its length was about eighty feet, and the backbone was eighteen inches through it. The weight was over six tons. The reptile when alive could not have been less than 100 feet long, and could lift its head thirty-five feet above the ground. Prof. Anghey, the state geologist, stated that the animal lived over five hundred thousand years ago.

After its fragments had been cemented together the petrification was exhibited in Sioux City and elsewhere by the Covington parties, and was finally taken to Chicago and sold to a museum there.

Another of Dixon county's curiosities and which attracted as much attention twenty years ago as the plesiosaurs or coal mines, was its volcano at Ionia. It was first seen by white men in 1804 and was then discovered by the Lewis and Clark exploring expedition, the first company of white men who for purposes of observation, ever visited the country now forming the state of Nebraska.

The passage of the Lewis and Clark expedition up the Missouri was marked by many adventures and discoveries. They often landed on the western shore, and going back of the ranges of bluffs, saw a beautiful and densely populated country. On the gently rolling prairies which stretched away to the west, they noted great herds of buffalo and an unending variety of game in the forests and fish in the lakes and streams. The copper colored inhabitants were friendly and hospitable, and intercourse with them was not marked by the treachery which in later times has generally been associated with the name of "Indian."

The expedition landed at two or three places in Dixon county, and at the place known of late years as the "Ionia Volcano" they stopped several days to investigate the phenomenon which was, as since, an interesting mystery. Here, as at other points on their route, they were welcomed by the Indians with the utmost courtesy and hospitality. Fish and game were supplied them and joyful Indian dances were held in their honor. By the aid of their interpreter, the travelers were made acquainted with several stories and old legends relating to the tribes who then and in still more



ancient days had lived in this country, their towns, wars and most noted warriors, their laws, customs and amusements. Among other things the voyagers were told the legends especially relating to the volcano and the story of the elves and supernatural inhabitants on Spirit Mound, a few miles above and on the opposite side of the river. Thus with feasting and pleasure the travelers passed a several enjoyable days, and their departure up the river was a source of regret to the friendly tribe whose guests they were.

The so called "Ionia Volcano" is (or more properly speaking was until 1878, when the river undermined and swept it away) located on the bank of the Missouri, in Dixou county, at Ionia, about twelve miles above Ponca and thirty-six miles from Sioux City. The bluff that has exhibited the phenomena ascribed to volcanic action was about 1,100 feet long, and 160 feet high, and sloped irregularly to the river.

The phenomena witnessed on this bluff led many to believe that the presence of a genuine volcano was indicated. Sounds were heard proceeding from below, especially on placing the ear to the ground. Occasionally flames were seen to break forth, especially at night, as at that time they were more easily observed. Steam also escaped from numberless crevices and where openings were made the heat became too intense to proceed further. Some of the lime stone was changed to quick lime, and the temperature of some portions of the interior was sufficient to raise it to a red heat. Incrustations of mineral salts were abundant on top and on the sides of the mass, and like all the rock of this description along the Missouri, crystals were abundant.

The rocks at this point are, as geologists inform us, of the cretaceous age, and largely composed of carbonate of lime. Innumerable crystals are also found of the bi-sulphide of iron which is popularly known as "fools gold," or iron pyrites.

Now, at this so called volcano the heat was occasioned, not by internal fires but by the decomposition of the iron pyrites and the carbonates of lime and magnesia, such decomposition being occasioned by exposure to air or water.

One of the histories of the voyage of Lewis and Clark, while speaking of the discovery by them of this remarkable burning mound, mentions that this phenomenon was well

known to the wild tribes scattered along the river and had from time immemorial, been regarded with much superstitious fear. Evil Manitous were supposed to dwell in the sulphurous fires, and many legends in which they were alluded to, were handed down from one generation to another, and lost none of their interest by the transition nor by the vivid imagination of the narrators. Elsewhere in this book will be found one of the principal legends referred to.

## CHAPTER X.

THE BUILDING OF THE RAILROAD UP THE LOGAN VALLEY AND ITS GREAT HELP IN SETTLING UP THE SOUTHERN PART OF THE COUNTY — THE TERRIBLE WINTER OF 1880-81 — THE SPRING BREAK-UP OF THE ICE IN THE MISSOURI AND THE DAMAGE AND LOSS OF LIFE ENSUING — GREAT BEND IS CUT OFF FROM DIXON COUNTY BY A CHANGE OF THE RIVER AND BECOMES A PART OF DAKOTA TERRITORY — THE FLOOD AT PONCA AND ALONG THE AOWAY AND LOGAN — THE STARTING OF WAKEFIELD IN 1881 — A TRAGEDY NEAR NEWCASTLE — THE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY PROJECT REVIVED AND THE FIRST COUNTY FAIR IN SEPTEMBER, 1882 — RECORD OF GENERAL GROWTH — INDIAN RAID ON EMERSON — ORGANIZATION OF THE FIRST G. A. R. POST IN COUNTY — BRIEF REVIEW AT END OF 1882.

As stated in chapter seven, the hope that Dixon county's narrow gauge railroad would pass into other and better hands, was realized in the fall of 1879, and soon a general overhauling and improvement ensued.

Commencement was also made by the new owners of the road to build from Coburn Junction, between Jackson and Dakota City, a branch line to the southeastern corner of Dixon county (where Emerson now is) and from there a line to Omaha and another to Norfolk. The Norfolk branch would run up Logan valley, and thus aid in opening the southern part of the county to settlement. There was also talk of extending the Ponca branch into Cedar county, either by the way of New Castle or Martinsburg. Cedar county was asked to vote bonds but its narrow escape from being bitten by the C. C. & B. H. Co., defeated the proposed extension.

The Logan valley under the stimulus of the expected Norfolk branch railroad, rapidly came into notice in 1880. Many settlers were seen moving in and buying farms which

could be obtained at from \$2 to \$3 per acre. (That land now sells readily for \$25 to \$40 per acre.) On October 14, the railroad company bought one hundred acres of land at Demy's Junction (Emerson) for a town site. In November the road was completed and cars running to Omaha from Coburn Junction, so that Ponca had direct communication with that city.

In this year (1880) this country had a short autumn. On October 15, a great storm of snow covered everything and plunged the country at once into winter. The winter thus commenced continued until the next April. The river was frozen over November 18, and remained so until in the spring it broke up and swept away a large amount of property. The winter which thus commenced so early, found farmers ill prepared for it. The corn was not all harvested and preparations for the housing of stock were in many instances not completed.

The winter showed no mercy. A succession of storms swept across the country in untiring and persistent rapidity. Railroads in all sections were blocked by snow, till regular trains became a novelty and more accidents were caused than ever before during the same length of time in the history of railroading. To add to the discomfort and danger in the northern portion of the county, small pox broke out across the river in Dakota. Fortunately it did not extend to the Nebraska side. But bad as the winter was and much as was the suffering occasioned by it, the worst was yet to come. When in April the snow melted and the rivers and streams were overflowing their banks, then disaster commenced in earnest.

When the Missouri broke up, Dakota for many miles up and down the river and for twenty miles back from it, appeared from the bluffs on the Nebraska side, as a vast sea filled with floating ice. The country thus submerged was the richest and most beautiful in Dakota territory. It was filled with highly cultivated farms, the fine dwellings and groves of which evinced comfort and prosperity. Now all that splendid region was overwhelmed with water and great masses of ice, and chaos and destruction ruled supreme. Tremendous gorges were formed at many points which were rapidly added to, so that between Sioux City and Niobrara

the extent of such gorges up and down the river was not less than 75 miles. Just below Ponca landing was an ice gorge 12 miles long and extending across the river and for miles into Dakota. It was packed solid to the bottom and rose above the water from ten to twenty feet. This enormous mass, tens of thousands of tons of ice, blocked up the course of the river and threw it over on the Dakota bottoms, literally drowning out all the country until stopped by bluffs.

It was reported that Niobrara was destroyed, that Yankton was in a great part under water and that Green Island, in Cedar county across the river from Yankton, was totally swept away. These reports were not greatly exaggerated. Every building in Green Island was carried away, and men, women and children were seen clinging to trees or on floating buildings or cakes of ice. By great exertions the lives of all at that place were saved.

Among the buildings seen floating past St. Helena was a church from Santee agency, the bell of which fittingly tolled a requiem over the scene of destruction. At Vermillion its business part was under water from ten to fifteen feet. Opposite Vermillion was the peninsula of Great Bend, around which the river had its course. The river cut a channel across the neck of the peninsula and therefore left that large part of Dixon county attached to Dakota. The people living on the peninsula escaped by boats. The channel across the neck of Great Bend was not cut by the force of the water running over from the upper side, but by undermining the bank on the lower or east end of the new channel, which kept caving off till within a short distance of the upper current, when with a mighty roar that could be heard for miles, the river broke through, and a new channel for that part of the Missouri was made.

The peninsula of Great Bend was one of the largest on the river. It was in the form of an elongated ox-bow very narrow at the points. Across its neck was only half a mile, while to make the distance around by the river it was necessary to pull about eighteen miles against a stiff current. This freak of the river left Vermillion an inland town so far as the Missouri is concerned by about three miles.

The farm of Mons Nelson lay on the neck of Great Bend,

and the channel cut across, taking his buildings and improvements and literally destroying the farm. Thus, Great Bend, hitherto belonging to Dixon county, and having rich lands and the richest body of timber within a hundred miles became an island belonging to Dakota.

On the river bottoms of the Dixon county side of the river, as on the low lands in Dakota, not a farm escaped the devastating raid of water and ice. Houses, barns, and improvements were greatly wrecked and many destroyed, and the loss in cattle drowned and other personal property ruined or carried off was enormous. J. Brocke in the northwestern part of the county, near the river, had a good house and barn, sixty head of cattle, nine horses, farm machinery, etc. The river came upon him and ruined him in one night. Huge cakes of ice dashed in his house, his barn was wrecked and with its contents washed away, and his horses and cattle were drowned. In the neighborhood of Mr. Brocke, several hundred head of cattle were drowned, every farm was deluged to the depth of from ten to fifteen feet and the inhabitants lost everything and were indeed glad to escape with their lives.

Such is an outline of the great flood of the spring of 1881 so far as it related to the Missouri river bottoms in Dixon county. There were great floods also, along the Aoway and Logan, but aside from carrying off a few bridges the loss was comparatively trifling.

In Ponca, on that occasion, people saw Venice without going away from home. A large part of the town appeared as though built in the sea. Four spans of the new railroad bridge went out, and eighty rods of railroad track were demoralized and in part carried off. Sidewalks rose from their foundations and sailed away and piles of cord wood were distributed in all directions. Cellars, generally, were filled and many residences and some business houses had water from one to four feet deep above the lower floor. It was unpleasant except to those who enjoyed navigating the streets on rafts but it was nothing compared to the loss and suffering on the Missouri bottoms.

At Martinsburg the damage was not as great as had been expected, the main losses being a part of the mill dam and the bridge across South Creek.

In spite of flood or other mishaps, the citizens continued in the season of 1881 in good heart, and plowed, planted, harvested and improved with usual energy and had success and good crops.

During this season the line of the Norfolk branch of the railroad then building up the Logan valley, was vigorously pushed, and in August the new town of Wakefield was started. The first building was the barn of Mr. Skinner, followed by D. D. Lash's hotel, J. T. Marriott's store and several dwelling houses. Mr. Marriott became the town's first postmaster October 31. The railroad was completed to that point in December, and a commodious depot was finished about the first of January. The town was named after Chief Engineer Wakefield who located the railroad line from Emerson to Norfolk. The town of Wakefield, thus advantageously located and having a fine water power and a rich tributary country around it, started with encouraging prospects. In the previous spring and summer many had settled in Logan valley, and within a radius of five miles around Wakefield about sixty farms had been opened and improved.

The central and northern part of the county during 1881, were not behind the Logan valley, and new farms were opened and new houses, barns, groves and fields were seen in every direction.

On November 10, 1881, a tragedy took place at the farm of W. H. Auchmoody, a few miles northwest of New Castle. The cattle of a neighbor, L. S. Bishop, had strayed upon the land of Auchmoody. Bishop came for the cattle and attempted to retake them, whereupon Auchmoody shot him, from the effects of which he died a few days after. Auchmoody was afterwards tried, convicted of manslaughter and sent to the penitentiary two years.

In February, 1882, the agricultural society project, which had slept since 1878, was revived. A meeting of prominent farmers met February 17, at Ponca, and resolved that Dixon county should no longer be without an agricultural society and fair. A committee was appointed to draft the constitution and by-laws of the society, which, at an adjourned meeting in March were adopted, and P. G. Wright of South Creek, was elected president, and Dayton Ward, of

Silver Creek, secretary. At a subsequent meeting held May 27, it was decided to locate the fair grounds at Ponca, that town having donated \$500 to the society. The time fixed for holding the fair was September 6, 7 and 8. Forty acres of land were procured for fair grounds a short distance northwest of town and steps were taken to make the fair successful.

The fair was duly held at the time and place appointed and was largely attended. The grounds had been suitably prepared, and buildings for offices and an amphitheater for the accommodation of those who attended had been built. There was also a half mile race course and stalls and stables for horses and cattle. This, the first fair of Dixon county, was a success, not only in the display of fat cattle, horses, hogs, corn, grain, vegetables, fruits and flowers but also in the social enjoyment it brought to old friends who met there.

The first day of the fair was devoted mainly to making entries and arranging articles for exhibition. On this day also, eating houses, lemonade stands, shooting galleries, swings, etc., were put up and by night things looked gay and attractive. On the second day an immense crowd attended from all parts of the county. Horse racing, ladies riding, an eloquent address by Lieut. Norris and a thousand other interesting matters made an enjoyable bill of fare to all present.

The number was also large on the third day. There was horse racing, mule racing, glass ball shooting, etc., and the examination of the articles on exhibition and the decision of the judges. At night when the fair closed, it was declared without a dissenting voice that this, the first fair in Dixon county, had been triumph that could be spoken of with pride by the citizens.

The amount of money taken for gate money and stands, swings, etc., was \$423.20, enough to pay premiums and debts and have something left to keep things in order and fix up for another year. Dixon County's Agricultural Society and Fair, thus auspiciously inaugurated has continued from that year to this and its fair has since been regularly and successfully held every year, excepting 1894.

The record of general growth in the county in 1882 was fully up to what it had been in previous years. Wakefield, commenced the fall before, had in March (1882) two general



stores, a hardware store, a bank, hotel, drug store, lumber yard, grain buyers and ware houses and numerous offices, shops and dwellings. In the spring, Philo Graves, one of the proprietors of the townsite, built a school house and donated it to the town. Village lots were in demand and were selling at good prices. It was thought Wakefield would double in size and population before the close of the year. At Ponca a creamery was started in April as well as various other enterprises of general benefit.

At a suburb of the new town of Emerson the citizens had an experience, May 6, not altogether pleasurable. The suburb was a mere collection of temporary shanties planted on land belonging to the Winnebago reservation where it had no right to be. Those who put up the shanties, probably never thought the day would come when retributive justice would visit them in the shape of a war like Indian chief and annihilate their works. But so it turned out. On May 5, the Winnebagos solemnly decreed in council to blot that part of Emerson out of existence and early the next morning the residents suddenly heard issuing from the mists along the plain the hoarse voices of the Winnebago retributionists who were advancing in force upon the place.

Mounted on ponies and presumably carrying an irresistible arsenal, the Indian band rode into the town and ordered the people to get off the reservation forthwith, giving them one hour in which to do so. Then there was a wild hurrying and scurrying to and fro. No one thought of offering resistance, but all went to work and soon their town, to the last board of the last shanty was toted off the reservation and up the hill. There, where is now the prosperous town of Emerson the discomfitted squatters on Indian land rebuilt their homes before resting from their toil. The Indian braves shook their fists after their vanquished foes and then hied back to their tribe.

Aside from this little raid on Emerson, (which more ludicrous than serious, is here inserted to break the monotony of dry facts and figures,) there were no occurrences in the county in the spring and summer that readers will specially care to hear of, except the rapid settlement, good health and cheerful outlook. On the Fourth, the good times seemed to increase patriotism, so that on that day the usual celebrations

were largely attended and much enjoyed at Ponca, Martinsburg, New Castle, Wakefield, Springbank and other points in the county.

After the agricultural fair was over, (previously described in this chapter) the old soldiers on October 4, held an enjoyable re-union in Ponca, on which occasion a post of the Grand Army of the Republic was organized. The name given it was Stoneman Post and the following officers were elected: L. W. Herring, post commander; J. T. Finch, senior vice-commander; E. R. Richmond, junior vice-commander; A. G. Kingsbury, adjutant; J. W. Jones, officer of the day; Jacob Sides, surgeon; Elijah Beller, quartermaster; and T. J. Caffee, sergeant major.

Late in the fall of 1882, the great brick flouring mill of Ponca Mill Company was finished and commenced business. This was a most important help, not only to the town, but to all the tributary country.

A few words in review of the county and towns as they were at the end of 1882 may now be interesting.

Ponca, located in a beautiful valley and then developed into a town of about 1,200 inhabitants, had many prosperous business establishments and enterprises, fine schools, churches and residences, and it seemed that it would in the near future become far more extensive.

Between Ponca and the healthily growing town of Martinsburg at the junction of two wide valleys, and from there up South Creek and over the divide to the Logan, one saw a continuous succession of splendid farms, fine farm houses, buildings and groves and numerous herds of cattle.

Another of Dixon county's lively towns, Wakefield, located in the valley of the Logan, largely had the trade of the southern part of the county. Two years before, Wakefield did not exist, but now had five hundred inhabitants.

Twelve miles northwest of Ponca was New Castle, which contained a hotel, a large store, a school, a Catholic church, residences, etc. From New Castle across the country to Daily Branch, as well as through Silver Creek and along the valley between Ponca and New Castle a grand and thickly settled country was seen.

Dixon county was, then as now, all right. Its location on the Missouri, gives it along that river, vast forests of

timber, comprising oak, elm, cottonwood and black walnut. Back from the river the county is traversed by the rich valleys of the Logan, Silver Creek, Daily, South Creek and Aoway, which with their numerous tributaries, are wonderful hay producing regions, five tons to the acre being not an unusual yield, while the ranges of hills between the valleys are the best of pasture lands. In all the county there is not a marsh nor an acre of poor land. On the contrary the soil is from two to six feet deep, and is equal to any in the world, as is shown by its crops of corn and wheat. Hence the old saying "that an acre of Dixon county land is equal to five in the Genesee valley," is not so wild an assertion as might at first be supposed. In all the valleys are clear, cold and unfailing streams and indeed there is scarcely a quarter section in the whole county that is not well watered.

With all these advantages of rich soil, meadow, pasture, water and wood in abundance, the whole presenting a landscape of surpassing beauty, and over the whole a clear air and healthy climate, Dixon county is naturally a favorite with those seeking homes in the west.

## CHAPTER XI.

FROM 1883 TO 1886 — THE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY HOLDS ITS ANNUAL FAIRS — TALK OF A RAILROAD BRIDGE — ROBBERY OF THE COUNTY TREASURY — TREASURER KNAPP AND HIS BONDSMEN — TOWNSHIP ORGANIZATION VOTED ON IN 1883 AND GOES INTO EFFECT IN 1886 — ANOTHER COUNTY SEAT PROJECT VOTED ON — GREAT STORM IN JUNE, 1885 — MURDER OF ALEXANDER BY BLAIR IN 1885.

The year of 1883, was without events of more than ordinary nature. There was some talk this year as there had been in 1882 of rebonding the county in order to pay the old C. C. & B. H. R. R. bonds and thus settle the suit which the county had in the U. S. supreme court, but such talk came to nothing. Dakota county had rebonded, and good attorneys thought the wisest course for Dixon county would be to do the same. But Dixon county refused then and afterwards, and was wise in so doing, as in the next year, 1884, the U. S. court settled the hash of the \$87,000 fraudulent C. C. & B. H. bonds and Dixon county had that burden lifted from its shoulders forever.

In February the business of the agricultural society came to the surface again, and its officers for the ensuing year were elected. P. G. Wright was re-elected president and J. W. Radford was elected secretary. From the interest which citizens throughout the county took in the society it was evident that the second fair would be as well patronized as the first.

In Ponca, Wakefield and other towns, as well as generally all over the county, everything tended to encourage citizens, and a healthy advance was made during the year. Crops, and especially wheat and oats, were good, as in fact they usually were every year.

The talk about extending the railroad from Ponca began to revive again and it appeared there was also a possibility

of a road being built from Omaha to this county and here crossing the river into Dakota. Both of these projects fell through.

It was and is a fact that at Ponca landing there is a better crossing for a railroad bridge over the Missouri, than can elsewhere be found on the river within a hundred miles. The river at that point has a rock bottom and has never since the first settlement of the country, changed its course.

Instead of extending the railroad west from Ponca, it was finally decided by the company to build a branch into Cedar county from Wakefield. On that branch work was commenced in July and late in the fall was completed and in running order to the new town of Hartington near the center of Cedar county.

The second Agricultural fair of Dixon county was held on the 18th, 19th and 20th of September and like the first fair had a large attendance of citizens, and a great number and variety of exhibits in every department. Those who attended realized that one great advantage to be derived from a county fair is by seeing what others are doing. Men have their specialty. Some succeed in one thing, some in another. By coming together from all parts of the county, each one bringing with him specimens of his peculiar skill and comparing notes, the whole county is benefited. One man learns from his neighbor the method of procedure by which he attained success in his department, and in turn he imparts the secret of his success in another department, so the fair is in one sense an agricultural school; the best kind of a school; one of practical instruction which leads or should lead to immediate results in improved farming, improved stock, improved fruit culture and general elevation of agriculture in all departments.

On Sunday of fair week, a great sensation was occasioned by the announcement of County Treasurer Knapp, that during the night before, the treasurer's office had been entered and the safe broken open and robbed of between \$3,000 and \$4,000. Detectives were at once sent for for the purpose of unraveling the suspicious mystery which seemed to surround the affair, but they were not able to fix the robbery upon those whom Mr. Knapp had pointed out as possibly the guilty parties. Mr. Knapp had been treasurer two years and

had not been renominated at the republican convention held a few days before the robbery. While treasurer, Mr. Knapp had operated at Ponca an extensive creamery, which it was alleged had resulted in a financial loss. These facts together with the fact that he had little property when he became treasurer, occasioned some doubt among many as to the reality of the alleged robbery.

This matter occupied much attention for two or three years and finally, on the charge of defrauding the county, Knapp was tried in the district court at Dakota City, (to which place the trial had been transferred from Dixon county) and on such trial he was acquitted.

The acquittal, however, did not save Knapp's bondsmen as treasurer. There were forty of them, each of whom had to assist in filling up the vacuum in the county treasury. At the time the bondsmen settled the affair with the county commissioners, (August, 1884,) Knapp in addition to what his bondsmen paid, deeded to the county a tract of 160 acres in Ponca township, which tract afterwards appropriately became the county poor farm. Knapp's deficiency was claimed to be about \$9,000.

Late in the fall, (1883,) the new court house was completed. It had been commenced in the summer and was on one of the most desirable locations in Ponca. It was built of brick and had a large court room in the second story and commodious offices for the various county officials beneath.

At the fall election of '83, the question of township organization was again voted on and carried, but did not go into effect until January, 1886.

During the years 1883 and 1884 a very large amount of building and improvement was seen in the county. The county was filling up rapidly and land was in greater demand and at better prices since the decision in the railroad bond case.

Among the improvements during these years it may be mentioned that at New Castle were built a gristmill, a church and several dwellings. A great number of farms in the county had in 1884, new houses, barns, fences and groves. A general awakening seemed to have taken place all over the county to the desirability of citizens

making improvements and additions to their possessions. Such improvements were mainly substantial and valuable and from them it might be certified that those who made them were contented with Dixon county and had concluded to stay in it. A few of the many farmers who thus helped to swell the list of improvements, were the Ellyson Brothers near Ionia, Euders near Ponca, S. Welden, G. D. Russell, A. Caffee, Pat Casey, H. H. Jenkins, P. Bennett, John Roden, Wm. Porter, V. Wilcox, E. Wilkinson, E. Manley, W. Blake, Aaron Smith, S. I. Hart, etc. In Ponca the value of improvements in '83 and '84 was about \$60,000. Of the more prominent improvemens were the brick M. E. church and the brick business houses of Thomas Crew, J. A. Mikesell and the Dorsey Brothers. The large flouring mill was also enlarged and improved. The largest skating rink in this part of the state was built and Gamble's opera house was doubled in size and attractions. Near the school house, S. P. Mikesell at a cost of \$6,000 erected a magnificent residence and Mrs. Addis transformed her place into one of the best in town. These are a few of the most expensive buildings erected during the year. There were many others in all parts of town, some costly and others cheap, but there was not a house or building in town unoccupied.

Another county seat removal project came up in 1884 and was voted on at a special election held September 18. It resulted in 779 votes for Ponca and 605 for Martinsburg.

The first lawless act in the history thus far of the Agricultural society took place at the fair held September 23, 24 and 25. T. J. Caffee was attacked and stabbed by W. W. Westbrook. The trouble grew out of a dispute on the race course. Caffee, though badly hurt, recovered and Westbrook was arrested, tried and sent to the penitentiary.

In the spring of 1885 a proposition to issue \$30,000 in bonds to pay the debts of the county, was voted down at a special election.

In April, the Logan Valley Agricultural Society was organized by citizens of Wakefield and the southern part of the county, and it was resolved to have a fair in the fall.

The month of June of that year, is noted as having had the worst wind storm ever experienced in Nebraska within the memory of man. On Sunday, June 14, a hurricane inter-

persed with a myriad of small but vindictive tornadoes, swept over the county like a besom of destruction. At about ten o'clock in the evening an immense cloud, extending as far as the eye could reach to the north and south, and so low down as to nearly touch the ground, was seen approaching with rapidity from the southwest. The tremendous roaring of the wind, the vivid lightning and peals of thunder gave warning that an appalling storm was at hand.

Doors and windows were hardly closed to make everything as secure as possible, before the storm burst in unexampled force. In its grasp, as in the hands of an army of giants, every house in the county was shaken, some were moved from their foundations and others were crushed and scattered before the gale. Fortunate houses indeed, were those which lost only chimneys or roofs. Barns, sheds and out-houses were tossed about and in many instances were broken up and their fragments swept away. Fences were overthrown and trees were torn up by the roots. But little was seen of the storm by the people, beyond their own houses. Without, its devastating energy moved forward in its work wrapped in nearly impenetrable darkness. Occasionally a flash of lightning lit up the scene for a moment, and gave a transient view of what was transpiring in the distance.

The storm raged an hour. Those who had cellars went into them for safety, and in a few instances saw their houses carried away over their heads. Some went out of their houses intending to find safer quarters elsewhere. In such efforts they were beaten to the ground in a moment, or blown before a wind which the strongest man could not withstand.

In this terrific shaking up, Ponca fared badly. Its churches seemed special objects of fury. The new brick M. E. church was crushed into a shapeless mass of brick, mortar and broken timbers. The Baptist and Lutheran churches were also visited, the former being wrecked and the latter so racked and twisted as to render a new one necessary to be built. On Third street, Bauer's implement warehouse, an immensely large building which was filled with machinery, was blown down and ruined, together with much of its contents. Stough & Mikesell's store, the mill, the store of John Davey, the railroad depot, Gamble's warehouse, the livery stables and many residences lost their roofs; some were removed



from their foundations and the new houses of A. Porter and P. H. Beller were entirely swept away. Nearly every building was more or less damaged, and barns and sheds generally here and elsewhere were tossed to destruction by the gale. A hundred chimneys were overthrown in town, windows were blown in, costly fences were torn in pieces and groves and gardens were ruined. The wind blew from seventy-five to one hundred miles an hour.

For miles in every direction around Ponca, evidences were seen of the destructive march of the storm. The house on the Blackard farm, the Green brick house, Shomber's house, the houses of Carnell, Smith and Marble, the school house in the Roden district and the next one west, W. Matteson's mill near the landing, the Silver Creek school house, were total wrecks. Rev. Clark's academy at Silver Ridge lost its cupola and chimneys, and near New Castle, Tim Rahn's large two story house was scattered with all its contents.

At New Castle the Congregational church was turned around and near there, in Ionia township, Warner's mill and numerous houses and barns were greatly damaged. At Martinsburg, J. Martin's store was torn down, Shultz and Matteson's store and the mill were unroofed, and many buildings in Galena and Springbank were either destroyed or greatly injured.

At Wakefield and Emerson the loss was comparatively light, though in the country tributary to those towns, a few houses and barns were wiped out of existence. In the storm but one loss of life occurred, Henry Erickson, who was killed six miles west of Wakefield by the timbers of a falling house.

Among other damage was that to the agricultural society buildings, on the fair grounds. The fences were blown away together with nearly everything inside of them, excepting the race course and the well. The agricultural hall was blown entirely off the grounds, and its fragments were distributed throughout the length and breadth of Hammel's corn field on the east.

The foregoing is but a partial list of the losses in the county. Nearly every building, grove and fence was injured, some slightly, others irreparably. The total loss in the county was estimated to be from \$35,000 to \$50,000. As to

the crops, the damage done to them was not so severe as might have been expected. Small grain was but little injured, and corn, though badly whipped about, was not so hurt that two weeks time would not restore it. Hence, after people recovered from the fright and saw that no material injury was done to the crops they were not discouraged but went to work to clear away the wreck and repair the damage. This was their first great storm and their hope that it would be the last has up to date been realized. But the storm induced nearly everyone to build a storm cave, to which when the clouds threatened they could retire and feel secure.

The census of the county which was taken in July showed a great increase in the number of its inhabitants. It had 5,590 a gain of about 40 per cent in five years.

In following the path of events as they occurred, the reader is now brought to another tragedy, the most horrible in the life of Dixon county since the murder of Mr. Dunn in 1870 by Mat Miller who therefor was promptly hanged by the citizens as related in a former chapter.

James Alexander, one of the pioneers of the county, had lived on his farm about six miles west of Ponca many years. Robert C. Blair, a young man 26 years old, had been working a farm adjoining, and boarded with Alexander. On the evening of October 22, (1885.) Alexander and Blair went to the granary to sack wheat and while there Blair shot and killed Alexander and then mounting his horse tried to escape out of the country. Immediately pursuit was made and the day after the murder Blair was captured. Alexander was unarmed at the time he was killed and hence Blair's claim that he shot him in self defense was exploded. The further fact that Alexander had been shot in the back, made proof conclusive that the murder was cold blooded and deliberate.

Blair's trial came before the district court at Ponca, November 5, less than two weeks after the crime was committed. After a careful investigation of the facts the jury found Blair guilty of murder in the second degree and he was sentenced by Judge Crawford to imprisonment for life. A week after he was taken to the penitentiary by Sheriff Pomeroy.

As township organization was to go into effect the

next January the county was in the fall divided into townships and at the election in November a board of fifteen supervisors were elected in place of the three commissioners. The first meeting of the board under the new order of things was held January 12, 1886, and consisted of the following members: A. Reynolds, Ponca township; Dr. Hasson, Ponca village; G. W. Waitt, Wakefield; P. G. Wright, Galena; C. W. Sherman, Daily; J. W. Ellyson, Ionia; Frank Reuter, Logan; W. Jenkins, Concord; W. H. Pomeroy, Springbank; M. L. Rossiter, Emerson; D. F. Curtis, Clark; H. C. Fields, Hooker; G. C. Wilson, Silver Creek; H. Sayre, Otter Creek; H. Richards, New Castle.

In the early part of the winter of '85-'86, Sioux City parties bought lands of W. H. Porter, F. Conrad, A. Reynolds, F. Baker and others, 600 acres in all, along the bluffs north of Ponca and near the river. The sudden demand for land in an unattractive locality, gave plausibility to the assertion that it was purchased for a company which had in view the building of a railroad and bridge across the river. In connection with this purchase, we will add that in the following August a Mr. Massey of Rockford, Illinois, came and bought another large tract of bluffy land near that of the Sioux City parties. He said he wanted it for an "Angora goat farm," a business that needed the roughest land. It was noticed that the land touched Lime Creek ravine where the Nebraska end of the much imagined railroad bridge was to be. For some land which had been deemed too worthless to pay the taxes on, Mr. Massey paid from fifty to one hundred dollars per acre.

There is no doubt of the fact that a great project was in view, which, had it been carried out, would have brought one or more railroads and a bridge into Dakota. But like many other schemes in the west it resulted in nothing. The only ones who received benefit were those who had unloaded their worthless lands on the bluffs.

In the fall of '86, the Dixon County Agricultural fair had some novel features which will be useful as hints to the managers of fairs in future. There were special premiums by which the handsomest couple who would be married in Floral Hall on the third day of the fair, received an elegant rocking chair. The most attractive girl, the hand-

somest woman and the best appearing man, all of Dixon county, had an appropriate gift to each. To the prettiest baby under twelve months, five dollars in gold. To the man with the longest nose, and he who had the largest feet, were also remembered by special premiums. With such a remarkable combination of attractions it may safely be said that the fair was a great success. It was held four days that year and had an attendance of between three and four thousand.

On November 6th, the trustees completed by ordinance the organization of Ponca into a city of the second class.

Thus we have briefly touched on the main events which transpired up to the close of 1886. At that time the country and the towns seemed on the high road to prosperity. Dixon county was gradually emerging from obscurity and the truth was generally becoming known that in agricultural wealth it was nearly at the top of the column of the counties in the state.

## CHAPTER XII.

RAILROAD RUMBLINGS — THE BUILDING OF THE SHORT LINE  
THE EXTENSION OF THE PONCA BRANCH TO NEW CASTLE  
THE BURNING OF THE MILL AT PONCA — THE FAILURE  
OF THE FIRST NATIONAL BANK — THE STARTING OF ALLEN,  
CONCORD, WATERBURY AND NEW CASTLE.

The life of a county, like that of an individual, is generally made up of a succession of little events, scarcely one of which, detached from the others, would be worth mentioning. This fact has thus far appeared in this as in every other history, and without doubt will be seen in the future. The small incidents separately not of much account, which occur in the course of a month or a year, make up the great bulk of its history, out of which arises, at rare intervals like a solitary rock on the prairie, some conspicuous event of real importance.

Looking back from the commencement of 1887 we saw the growth of business up to that time had been rapid. As a sample, take the railroad business at Ponca. The total amount of freight received at that station during the year 1885 was 8,981,628 pounds; during the year 1886 it was 10,159,419 pounds. Total amount of freight forwarded during the year 1885 was 9,703,013 pounds; during the year 1886 it was 11,750,851. Total increase of tonnage 3,225,575. Gross earnings of station for 1885 was \$44,451.18; for year 1886 was \$49,968.35, an increase of \$5,517.17 in station earnings. Such an amount showed that the people of the northern part of the county who sent or received it, were not idle. Nearly the same amount of business was done at Wakefield, indicating altogether, as reliably as a barometer of the weather, the condition of business in the county.

In 1887, as in 1886, there were innumerable rumors of new railroad prospects affecting Dixon county. Parties of railroad surveyors would pass through, diligently running

lines and driving stakes, but answering no questions. Some came from the southwest and others from Sioux City. The Springbank region frequently had hope excited by the sight of such surveyors in all the panoply of compasses, levels, transits and chains, moving to and fro. Surveyors claiming to be from North Platte ran a line along the Otter Creek valley and soon after was followed by Union Pacific surveyors over the same ground, and another surveying outfit was seen measuring and staking its way along the valley of Elk Creek. Surveyors ran a line from Clairmont station in Cedar county, down Tarbox Hollow, so called, to the South Creek valley and from thence to Martinsburg and Ponca. Others came down Daily valley to Martinsburg and from there headed towards Sioux City leaving Ponca out in the cold. It was confidently asserted by those who claimed to know all about it, that the Union Pacific railroad would be extended from Norfolk to the Missouri river at Ponca and there by a bridge cross into Dakota. It was also said by others with equal confidence that the Union Pacific would not build such a line to Ponca but would branch off through Springbank and the Elk Valley to Jackson and from there to Covington. In such a multitude of reports, many of them conflicting, no one could tell which to believe. The safest way was not to believe any, and as matters turned out, such a general disbelief would have been the most correct method of dealing with the subject.

At the time of these rumors, a new excitement, not quite so important as the railroad stories but more interesting, was started by a man named Keyser, who claimed he had found a diamond. He had in fact found in Lime Kiln ravine a transparent stone, weighing about two ounces, but whether a genuine diamond or a diamond of the Alaska variety, was the question. If it were genuine, it was worth enough to build a railroad and a bridge across the Missouri, but if an Alaska diamond, it was not as valuable as an equally sized seed potato. Excited by the "diamond" discovery, several parties went prospecting in the bluffs along the river for gold, and an enthusiastic resident of Ionia township claimed he had discovered a rich deposit of plumbago.

These various excitements,—railroad, diamond, gold and plumbago,—caused some one on April 1 (All Fools' Day) to get

up a burlesque report that five large companies of railroad surveyors were approaching Ponca from as many different directions. The story in full, as it was told, although not exactly the right thing to put into the pages of a sedate history, will still be useful as showing what a healthy and vivid western imagination can do, as also the fact that people had in those days lots of fun occasionally. Here it is: "A large force of railroad engineers are now beating up the ground in 'Tarbox Hollow.' One of the engineers was heard to say to another that they 'would in 24 hours be where they could get their canteens filled.' That, considering the direction they were moving and the time indicated, meant Ponca. Therefore the surveyors will soon be in Ponca.

"Another large crowd of surveyors are now advancing down South Creek, preceded by a full military band led by a drum major in the gorgeous costume of an Abyssinian prince. As they march along, the neighboring hills resound to the music of trumpets and shawms. A long line of wagons are carrying the surveying instruments and camp equipage. They will get to Ponca tomorrow.

"Two full corps of opposing railroad engineers are neck and neck running lines down Silver Creek. The needles of their compasses point toward Ponca. The chief engineers on sorrel horses ride in front cheering on their men. It is impossible to determine which will get there first.

"A company of forty surveyors approach by the way of New Castle. The chief engineer in the costume of a Turkish pasha, is leading the procession mounted on a burro and followed by a company of bespangled sword swallowers, ball tossers, wire dancers, tumblers and contortionists, who in their professional capacities entertain the party as it comes down the valley. After these comes a large platform or float on wheels drawn by a long train of oxen. On the float the surveyors are stationed with theodolites and other instruments, and determine as they move along, the height of the hills and all questions of grade, cut, fill, etc.

"A tremendous firing across the river is said to indicate a salute on approach of the surveyors from Elk Point."

During the year there were few matters of any great importance occurring in the county. Railroad rumors, Lime

Kiln ravine bridge matters and other fictions for boom purposes, furnished something to talk about while the crops were growing and the cattle on the thousand green hills and valleys were getting fat and ready for market. On the Fourth of July the various towns had their celebrations largely attended. There was building and improvement as usual and an increasing demand and higher prices for farms. The county fair in the fall was well attended and a big balloon and an oration from Hon. J. M. Thurston of Omaha were drawing attractions.

When at the end of the year Christmas and New Year's days came with the usual church decorations, gifts and reunions of families and friends, the citizens of the county had reason from the experiences of the past to face the future with confidence.

The commencement of the year 1888 was marked by the greatest blizzard (January 12) that this country ever saw since its settlement by white people. In this state as well as in Iowa, Dakota and Minnesota, the oldest inhabitants could remember nothing approaching it in severity. In all, about two hundred and fifty persons were frozen to death and the loss of stock, especially in the western part of Nebraska, was very great. Dixon county came out of the ordeal much better than most localities. There was much suffering here and some narrow escapes by being caught out in the storm but none were frozen to death and the cattle were generally well sheltered and in safety.

During this year, as in the year before, there was a continuous succession of rumors and surmises on future railroad possibilities. In June a party of railroad surveyors commenced at Randolph, Cedar county, to run a line eastward towards Sioux City. When on their route the surveyors came to Dixon county, they ran various lines, so that scarcely a valley in the central part of the county was not decorated with the stakes of a preliminary survey. One route crossed South Creek valley at Martinsburg and another several miles above. The lines came together at Mr. Herrick's place in Otter Creek valley where it was thought would be a railroad town. Where Tarbox Hollow opens into South Creek valley another town was deemed liable. If the Martinsburg route was followed, that village being near the cen-



ter of the county, would become a place of importance. The final result of the various surveys was that the Sioux City and Ogden Short Line Railroad was located and built through the county.

In April, 1889, contracts were let to build 100 miles of it. Work soon after commenced and in the spring of 1890 the track was completed through the county. On this part of the route three new towns were started. One of them, Allen, was on the farm of Henry Allen in Springbank township, about twenty-nine miles from Sioux City and twenty from Ponca.

Another town was on Mr. Herrick's land in Otter Creek township and on the eastern side of the county and was given the name of Waterbury. The third town located was Concord near the county's west line. All the three places had encouraging growth, and Allen, on account of its central location, might, it was claimed, become the county seat of the county.

The county thus, with these three additions, had nine thriving young cities, viz: Ponca, Wakefield, Martinsburg, Concord, Emerson, New Castle, Allen, Dixon and Waterbury, all of which excepting New Castle and Martinsburg were railroad towns.

In May, 1892, there were rumors that the C., St. P., M. & O. R. R. would soon be extended from Ponca to New Castle. In the course of a few months it was seen that the rumor would be a certainty. In September a committee of New Castle business men, the most prominent being Thomas Hoy, the leading merchant of that place, went to St. Paul, where they met President Hughitt and General Manager Winters of the Omaha company. They were given audiences by those gentlemen and made a statement of their case. They showed that the extension they asked would be a cheap one to build, and would be certain to secure enough business to be profitable. As a result of this interview, the Omaha people made a proposition to the New Castle men. They stated that if they made the extension they would have to buy about sixty-five acres of land for right-of-way and forty to fifty acres more at New Castle for yards, station room, etc. They did not place any figures on this property, but told the New Castle people to go back home and find out on what

terms it could be secured. After they had done this if they would raise the money or secure donations enough to meet half the expense of purchasing it, the road would give serious consideration to the proposition for an immediate extension. The committee returned home and at once called a meeting to discuss ways and means for complying with the demand of the road. At such meeting subscriptions to the amount of \$3,000 were secured. This promptness and energy on the part of Mr. Hoy and his friends resulted in the decision of the railroad company to make the extension.

In November the contract was signed by the company to build its line to New Castle and have it in operation not later than September, 1893.

Aside from these railroad matters which had occupied general attention for several years, the progress of the county had continued at its usual speed. There had been new enterprises and a long succession of good crops. People were in fact, if they but realized it, on the high road to wealth, and all that was required to attain it was industry, energy and a determination to avoid debt. A great number of new families had moved in and but few went away, and those who went—some to California and others to Florida—in nine times out of ten returned in a year to Dixon county more contented than ever before.

Life was not, however, without an occasional drawback. Sometimes we had too much rain or too little for the good of the crops and at long intervals a prairie fire or a heavy wind would do some damage. In the spring of '89 quite extensive prairie fires were in Silver Creek, Ponca, Ionia and Daily and occasioned much loss of property. These fires were not as bad as those that occurred a few years before, but they were bad enough.

The year 1893 was in some respects an unfortunate one for Ponca. Up to that time it had grown and prospered, and its good fortune for years had been uninterrupted. But this year a series of troubles came upon it, perhaps none that would materially interfere with its future prospects, but troubles which were discouraging and exasperating.

First, in February, the Ponca mill with its adjacent buildings and a great quantity of flour and grain was burned. The night of the fire was extremely cold and disagreeable.

and a fierce, cutting gale blew from the northwest making the work of fighting the flames most difficult. The mill and contents, including 4,000 bushels of wheat and about four carloads of flour, together with the elevator containing 14,000 bushels of wheat, and the dwelling, was a total loss, and the flour house was practically destroyed, making a loss on the buildings of about \$32,000 and on the grain and flour of \$12,000. The mill and machinery had an insurance of \$14,700 and the elevator was insured for \$1,500, and there was some insurance on the grain and flour.

The mill was built by John Stough, Sr. and S. P. Mike-sell in 1882-83, and was operated by the founders until September 13, 1883, when S. K. Bittenbender was taken into partnership. The mill was incorporated in 1886 and was conducted from that time under the corporate name of Ponca Mill Co. It was distinguished as being one of the best constructed mills in the west, with every adjunct and improvement that would facilitate its work and enable the making of high grade flour for which it had an enviable reputation.

The main building, 49x60 feet, had four stories, and was built of stone and brick. The floors were of white oak and hard maple, and all of the spouting were hard dressed, beaded and shellaced, thus showing, in part, how well the structure was built. The machinery was of the "long system style," and, always kept in repair, was by no means inferior to any modern mill. Its average yield, as shown by automatic scales, was forty-two pounds of flour for every bushel of cleaned wheat, which fact alone placed it among the best mills of the day. In fact it would be folly to try to build a better mill or one that would maintain a higher standard of effective work.

The mill usually ground 100,000 bushels per year and found a ready market in Nebraska, Iowa and South Dakota, and great quantities of flour were also furnished to the United States army as well as to the Indians in Dakota and Montana.

The system of waterworks which had been building in town was not yet fully completed and hence on the occasion of the fire was nearly useless.

A second misfortune was the disastrous failure of the First National Bank of Ponca on April 27. On that day a

notice was posted on the door of the bank stating that "owing to the recent failures in Sioux City and elsewhere, and being called upon for money due, the bank is compelled to close temporarily, and that depositors will be paid as soon as matters can be adjusted." It was hoped by depositors that the suspension was as stated in the notice, only temporary. The sworn statement made out under the supervision of the bank examiner the month before, showed conclusively that depositors were absolutely safe. Under that statement the resources of the bank were over \$200,000 and the indebtedness to the depositors about \$100,000.

But notwithstanding the assertion of the entire safety of depositors, a thousand rumors were soon in circulation as to the cause of the failure and the amount of assets and liabilities. By some it was said that the bank was and had been for a long time hopelessly rotten, that depositors had been hoodwinked, and that their money had been unscrupulously used in extravagance and recklessness in transactions outside the legitimate business of the bank.

The man who seemed to have the most to do with the control and management of the bank up to the time of its failure was F. M. Dorsey. A few years before, he came to Ponca and opened a private bank in the name of Dorsey Brothers, and from that commencement the First National Bank was developed and Ex-Congressman Geo. W. E. Dorsey became president of it. F. M. Dorsey was a man whose extravagances, enterprises and expenses required a large amount of money. He built on East street a residence costing several thousand dollars. He had a large stable of fast horses, and was the main stay of the "Diamond Stock Farm," so called. He was also one of the leading managers of the "Ponca Driving and Fair Association," and in all respects appeared to be a "high roller" with plenty of money at all times and always ready to expend it for his own gratification.

As receiver of the bank, Albert Watkins of Lincoln was appointed soon after the failure and immediately entered upon the duties of the office.

The failure of this bank created great distress among many. There was a large number of depositors, some of whom had placed in the bank every dollar they had in the world. They were old men and women and even children.

who deposited and lost their little savings, and starvation or the poor house seemed to be the only relief for them. As people began to believe that the wreck was caused by circumstances not beyond the control of F. M. Dorsey and his coterie of sympathetic aiders, public indignation grew until almost unbearable.

In October a dividend of 20 per cent. was paid to the depositors. No farther dividends have been paid up to this time, (December, 1895) but it is hoped there will be.

Soon after this failure Dorsey was indicted in the United States Court at Omaha for falsifying the books of the bank and other charges, but thus far he has not been tried. A favorite method by which to get hold of the money of the bank was, as reported by those who claimed to know, the following: A man deposits \$500 in the bank. Thereupon Dorsey goes to one of the hostlers in his stable or to some other subservient satellite, and gets him to sign a note for \$500. This note is then endorsed "Dorsey Brothers," and discounted at the bank. Thus, Dorsey captures the \$500 and the bank has the note. Then the bank sends the note to an eastern bank and it is re-discounted, and then the First National gets its \$500 again. Then if Dorsey desires more money he can make another note and have it signed by some willing tool, and he is enabled to get hold of the \$500 again. And so on ad infinitum. It was a great scheme and as long as eastern banks would re-discount western paper, was better than a first class gold mine.

What will ever be done with Dorsey, no one can tell. Had he been merely guilty of petit larceny, or if hunger had driven him to steal a loaf of bread, he would have been punished long ago. But in this country the maxim seems to be, "the greater the crime the greater the safety of the criminal." Dorsey did not stay in Ponca long after the failure but went to Sioux City where, amid society more congenial to him, he has since remained.

The hard times and the failure of the First National Bank brought about the downfall of the Ponca Driving and Fair Association. The track, a mile around it and the best in this part of the state, had been perfected by great labor and expense. A large number of costly buildings, amphi-

theater, stables, sheds, fences, etc., had also been built and it seemed a pity that all should come to nothing.

Another misfortune of the year was the burning in December of the Aoway Valley Creamery at Ponca. The building was a good one and had the latest and best machinery and improvements, and was doing an extensive business and giving employment to a large number of men during a part of each year.

The railroad was duly extended to New Castle in 1893. That ambitious and deserving young city is situated in the Aoway valley. The founder of the town was Gustavus Smith (or more properly, Schmidt) since deceased, who many years ago laid out the place and gave it its name.

In 1871 a few houses, mostly log, were all there was to New Castle. The "first store" was built by Mr. Smith in 1871 and was stocked by S. Reineman of Covington and managed by his brother, Albert. The venture was unsuccessful and the proprietors were numerous for the next ten years, of whom were Mr. Smith, S. B. Hughes and then Thos. Hoy. Mr. Hoy burned out, rebuilt, and sold a half interest to John Coleman. The firm of Hoy & Coleman did a fine business for a number of years, but dissolved about a year before, Mr. Hoy taking the stock, which he still owns and manages, and Mr. Coleman going into general hardware trade. The country around New Castle is among the most productive in the state and is settled by progressive and industrious farmers.

In the winter before the railroad was extended and before the "boom" struck New Castle, that town had not over ten or fifteen buildings all told, among which were two churches, Catholic and Congregational, and a school house. But during that winter, in anticipation of the expected road the place commenced to grow and soon in the course of erection was a bank to be managed by W. P. Logan, of Ponca; a mill by Jas. B. Connery and Jas. McGrath with a capacity of fifty barrels per day; another hotel by W. H. Hopkins; two lumber yards; two livery barns; a saloon; a meat market, and last but not least a newspaper.

In January after the road was completed New Castle was a brisk and well built railroad town. Its growth since a year before had been constant and healthy and it now con-

tained three large general stores, two drug stores, a grist mill, two hotels, a good newspaper, numerous shops, offices and dwelling houses.

Notwithstanding all the buffeting of ill fortune during 1893, Ponca at the end of that year and during 1894 had every appearance of being still in the ring and all right.

On September 13, 1894, the pioneers and old settlers of the county held their first picnic. It was in Hurley's grove near Martinsburg and attended by about 3,000 people. At that time there was a permanent organization of the "Old Settlers and Pioneers' Society" of Dixon County. A constitution was adopted and the following officers were elected: C. F. Putnam, president; N. S. Porter, vice-president; George Herrick, treasurer, and C. W. Schram, secretary.

The second annual picnic of the association was held at the same place, September 5, 1895, and the attendance was larger than the year before. The officers elected for the ensuing year were: President, David Murphy, of South Creek; vice-president, George Mattison, Ponca township; treasurer, Geo. Herrick, Otter Creek; secretary, C. W. Schram, Silver Creek. On both these occasions orations, music and elegant picnic dinners made an enjoyable bill of fare. It is to be hoped these reunions, thus auspiciously commenced, will always be continued.

## CHAPTER XIII.

ASSESSMENTS, POPULATION, IMPROVED LAND, FRUIT AND FOREST TREES, MARRIAGES, BIRTHS AND DEATHS, FROM ORGANIZATION OF THE COUNTY TO THE PRESENT TIME — LISTS OF COUNTY OFFICERS, CLERKS, TREASURERS, COMMISSIONERS AND SUPERVISORS, PROBATE AND COUNTY JUDGES, SHERIFFS AND SUPERINTENDENTS OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION, COUNTY ATTORNEYS, CLERKS OF COURT AND SURVEYORS, FROM THE FIRST UNTIL NOW.

Dixon County, which commenced with nothing except brains and energy, has now much to show. The first settlers found when they came in the spring of 1856, a wild, unbroken and unimproved country peopled only by Indians. The whites who came were poor, having in a great majority of instances scarcely any money and a very meager supply of goods or other property.

Had an assessment been made in the summer of 1856 of the taxable property in the country which afterward became Dixon County, the value would of course have been expressed by a cypher. Starting thus at zero in 1856 let us see how the county has developed since then.

First, as to population:

On May 1, 1856, nobody; January 1, 1857, estimated at from 150 to 200; January 1, 1858, according to old settlers there were from 300 to 400 people here. Then hard times came on and for a few years the population decreased somewhat.

In 1860 there were only 240 residents in the county and there was little increase until after the year of the great drouth, 1864, then it commenced gaining rapidly, and in 1870 was 1,345.

During the next five years the population more than doubled, being in 1875, 2,886.

In 1878 there were 3,512 and in 1880, 4,177, and ten



years later the population had almost doubled, the number in 1890 being 8,084.

Carefully figuring the same rate of increase the citizens of Dixon county numbered not less than 12,000 on January 1, 1896.

Taking into consideration the numerous vicissitudes and drawbacks, the drouth, grasshoppers and failures of crops during several years, and the consequent discouragement and moving away of many of the people, the progress as to population, has been beyond the average of the counties of the state.

Next, as to improved land, groves and orchards:

Starting at zero in 1856, we find that half way on the journey from that date to the present time there were 18,500 acres of land under cultivation, 12,700 acres fenced, 6,000 fruit trees and about 1,250,000 forest trees had been planted, of which 1,000,000 were cottonwoods, and the remainder were soft maples, walnuts and box elders. This was a good showing for the first nineteen years, but the next nineteen years show a much greater advance.

In 1884 the acres of improved land were	136,066
The number of fruit trees	286,600
Grape vines.	99,250
Forest trees	5,500,000

It appears from the above that during the first nineteen years, there was an average of nearly one thousand acres improved every year. In contrast with this during the next nineteen years, the average number of acres of land improved per year was over six thousand.

A much more wonderful rate of increase may be seen by comparing the fruit and forest trees planted during the two periods. During the first nineteen years, 6,000 fruit trees and 1,250,000 forest trees did not evince a very energetic desire to have orchards and sheltering groves, and the showing is insignificant when compared with what was done in the next nineteen years.

During the latter period, instead of a trifle over 300 fruit trees per year, the average planted annually was 14,768, and the forest trees came up to the enormous average of 223,600 per year.

In 1895 the amount of land under cultivation was, for

wheat 20,458 acres; corn 61,367 acres; oats 17,462; barley 456; flax 1,500; potatoes 300; sugar beets 50, and millet 565 acres. During this year 46,465 fruit trees were planted, 1,756,230 forest trees and 15,365 grape vines.

It may seem almost impossible that these figures are true, but they are obtained from records and reports in the county clerk's office and may therefore be depended upon as reliable.

The assessed valuation of property:

The first assessment was made in 1859, and as we are told by the assessor there being no record on the subject extant, the valuation was about \$4,800.

From 1859 to 1864, five years, there is nothing written or verbal to give any certain information as to what the valuations were. Old residents tell us that assessments were made and that during at least two of the five years, the valuations were even less than they were in 1859. The hardness of the times had driven away many, and money was scarce and improvements few. The first assessment after 1859, of which we can find authentic information, was that of 1864.

This was the most disastrous year of all, yet the assessed valuation loomed up in great proportions, viz: \$44,854. This enormous increase of valuation after all the previous poverty stricken years, was of course not occasioned by any increased prosperity on the part of the actual settlers. But great quantities of land had been bought from the government by non-resident speculators, and it was mainly this land, and probably at as large a price as the assessor's conscience would permit, which swelled the valuation to such large figures. In that year the number of acres assessed was 15,239, and it is safe to say that not a tenth of it was owned by actual residents of the county.

In 1865 the valuation was \$48,863. Not a very wonderful advance over that of the previous year, but at the time the assessment was made in the spring, settlers had barely emerged from the terrible fifteen months of drouth, which came near wrecking the county and driving everybody out of it, and of course during the time that lasted, dragging down the values of lands and improvements to their lowest ebb.

The next assessment, spring of 1866 everything booming again the valuation rose to \$64,204. From this time forward there was a very rapid increase. The following are the figures:

1867	\$ 71,894 00
1868	100,890 00
1869	150,845 00

(The rapid increase of the valuation will be noticed from 1867 to 1868. There was a gain of about \$29,000, and from 1868 to 1869 a gain of \$50,000.)

1870	\$223,746 00
1871	303,600 00
1872	460,870 00
1873	610,854 00
1874	717,620 00

From 1871 to 1874, inclusive, the yearly increase of valuation was from \$100,000 to \$150,000. People were evidently enjoying most prosperous years.

In 1875, however, things went the other way for a time. The grasshoppers had come in the summer of 1874, and had made a clean sweep of every growing thing. People were discouraged again, many sold out at half price and moved away, and the value of property fell. Hence, in 1875 the assessed valuation tumbled from \$717,620, as it was the year before, down to \$587,331, being a shrinkage of \$130,289.

However, in 1876, the scare was mainly over, property went up in value again, and the assessed valuation jumped up to \$730,515, being about \$13,000 above what it had been in 1874.

In 1877 the valuation was \$990,268, showing the enormous increase of \$259,753 over that of the previous year. The next two years the valuation went down again. The figures are as follows:

1878	\$ 883,935 00
1879	782,388 00
1880	894,347 00
1881	928,218 00
1882	963,016 00
1883	1,168,581 00
1884	1,333,035 00
1885	1,519,623 00
1886	1,598,107 00
1887	1,545,739 00
1888	1,529,168 00
1889	1,504,726 00
1890	1,451,935 00
1891	1,520,364 00
1892	1,616,521 00
1893	1,617,234 00
1894	1,644,804 00
1895	1,567,492 00

For the past eight years the valuation has increased but little. This was not occasioned by the county standing still in its efforts for wealth. The actual increase in value has been as great as during the most prosperous years of the county, but the rates of assessment were greatly reduced, and the assessed valuation was kept in the neighborhood of \$1,500,000, each year.

In considering the progress of the county, it will be well to consider the number of marriages and births and deaths.

The records of the marriages in the county, after its organization, are not complete during the first one or two years. According to the books in the county judge's office the first couple married in the county was S. B. Stough and Helena Ernst on May 15, 1861. That they were not the first is shown by the memory of old residents who claim that from thirty to forty had been married previous to that time, the record of which has been lost.

From the records in existence it appears that nine hundred and seventy-five marriages have taken place in the county since May 15, 1861. If thirty-five couples had been married before that date, Dixon county has had one thousand and fifty-three marriages since its first settlement up to the present time. In the past few years the number of marriages per year has greatly increased. In 1892 there were sixty-one, in 1893 seventy-nine, in 1894 forty-eight.

As to births and deaths there are no records from which to obtain information. From the best evidence that can be had it is presumed that there have been not less than two thousand, eight hundred births in the county since its organization and nineteen hundred deaths, the births being much greater in number than the deaths. The difference being eight hundred and fifty, it is plain that so far as health and longevity are concerned, this country is fully equal to Minnesota, where the annual death rate is about nine out of every thousand.

Dixon county officers from the first election in 1858 to the present time,

#### COUNTY CLERKS.

Edward Arnold, from first election held in December, 1858, to October, 1859.

Edward Serry, from October, 1859, to October, 1863.

E. M. Bisbee, from October, 1863, to October, 1865, when he resigned, and Edward Serry was elected from October, 1866, to October, 1868.

C. W. Todd, from October, 1868, for one year.

W. D. Long, elected in October, 1869, and continued to September 6, 1870, when he resigned and T. J. Welty was appointed to fill the vacancy.

E. M. Bisbee from October 19, 1870, to October 26, 1871.

T. J. Welty, from October 26, 1871, through '72, '73, '74, '75.

E. M. Bisbee, in 1876, '77, '78, '79, '80, '81, '82, '83, '84 and '85.

J. W. Radford, '86, '87, '88 and '89.

T. J. Shiebley, '90, '91, '92, '93, '94 and '95, and was succeeded on January 1, 1896, by J. C. Ekeroth.

#### COUNTY TREASURERS.

John Malone was elected in December, 1858. He was the first treasurer of the county. Held the office until October 11, 1859, and was re-elected for two years and until October, 1861.

Gustavus Smith, October, 1861, to October, 1863.

Leander Davis from October, 1863, to spring of 1865, when he resigned and moved to Sioux City and W. P. Heydon was appointed to fill the vacancy.

In the fall of 1865, A. Davis was elected and was treasurer during 1866, '67, '68, '69, '70, '71, '72, '73, '74, '75, ten years, and was followed by Dennis Hurley from January, 1876, to January, 1882, six years. He was succeeded by R. H. Knapp, who held the office until 1884.

C. T. Barto was treasurer from January, 1884, to January, 1888.

M. L. Rossiter from January, 1888, to January, 1892.

R. H. Pomeroy from January, 1892, to January 1, 1896, when he was succeeded by J. D. Stough.

#### COMMISSIONERS AND SUPERVISORS.

At the first election held in 1858, John Cavanagh, H. A. Fuller and J. Massinger were elected commissioners until the next general election in October, 1859.

October 11, 1859, were elected W. W. Benedict, J. H. S. Grove and M. Gorman.

In June, 1860, the commissioners were M. Gorman, Maurice Scollard and H. M. Pierce.

In 1861 and until June, 1862, M. Scollard, S. P. Baltzley and H. M. Pierce.

From June, 1862, to October of the same year, William Gillan, M. Scollard and S. P. Baltzley.

October, 1862, M. Scollard, S. P. Baltzley and John Cavanagh.

October, 1863, M. Scollard, James Alexander and A. Kniss.

October, 1864, William Gillan, G. Smith and John Cavanagh.

October, 1865, G. Smith, John Stough and John Brookey.

October, 1866, John Stough, M. Gorman and John Sader.

October, 1867, the same.

October, 1868, the same.

October, 1869, John Stough, M. Gorman and Otis Dygart.

October, 1870, M. Gorman, Otis Dygart and N. S. Porter.

October, 1871, Otis Dygart, N. S. Porter and I. N. Moore.

October, 1872, Porter, Moore and O. P. Sullenberger.

October, 1873, I. N. Moore, O. P. Sullenberger and W. H. Clark.

Previous to this time the commissioners commenced in October, as soon as the vote was canvassed. Afterwards they took the office on the 1st day of January.

January, 1874, Moore, Sullenberger and Clark. April 17, 1874, Moore resigned and C. M. Crowell was appointed.

January, 1875, O. P. Sullenberger, W. H. Clark and J. Martin.

January, 1876, W. H. Clark, J. Martin and Philip Dougherty.

January, 1877, J. Martin, P. Dougherty and John McKinley.

January, 1878, P. G. Wright, John McKinley and C. W. Sherman.

January, 1879, W. W. Atkinson, P. G. Wright and John McKinley.

January, 1880, P. G. Wright, W. W. Atkinson and A. Drager.

January, 1881, W. W. Atkinson, August Drager and R. H. Pomeroy.

January, 1882, the same.

January, 1883, W. W. Atkinson, R. H. Pomeroy and Anton Engle.

January, 1884, Anton Engle, W. W. Atkinson and Seth Hamlin.

January, 1885, N. S. Porter, Seth Hamlin and J. W. Ellyson.

(In 1886 the supervisor system came into effect.)

#### SUPERVISORS.

1886—P. G. Wright, chairman, Galena; A. Reynolds, Ponca township; D. W. Hasson, Ponca village; G. W. Waitt, Wakefield; C. W. Sherman, Daily; J. W. Ellyson, Ionia; Frank Reuter, Logan; W. Jenkins, Concord; W. H. Pomeroy, Springbank; M. L. Rossiter, Emerson; D. F. Curtis, Clark; H. C. Fields, Hooker; G. C. Wilson, Silver Creek; H. Sayre, Otter Creek; and H. Richards, New Castle.

1887 W. H. Pomeroy, chairman, Springbank; D. F. Curtis, Clark; J. F. Gibbs, Ionia; T. A. Brennan, Hooker; G. B. Francis, Ponca City; G. O. Acres, Concord; John McGough, New Castle; Frank Reuter, Logan; W. A. Neeley, Wakefield; M. L. Rossiter, Emerson; M. B. DeWitt, Ponca township; C. W. Sherman, Daily; L. Harper, Otter Creek; P. Dempsey, Silver Creek; Lyman Wright, Galena.

1888 W. H. Pomeroy, chairman, Springbank; Frank Reuter, Logan; G. O. Acres, Concord; J. Sullivan, Clark; C. W. Sherman, Daily; T. H. Brennan, Hooker; W. A. Neeley, Wakefield; D. Hurley, Galena; J. F. Gibbs, Ionia; H. Richards, New Castle; James Monier, Emerson; L. P. Harper, Otter Creek; M. B. DeWitt, Ponca township; A. Drager, Ponca City; P. A. Dempsey, Silver Creek.

1889 G. O. Acres, chairman, Concord; A. Drager, Ponca City; M. B. DeWitt, Ponca township; W. A. Matteson, Galena; Nels Johnson, Hooker; H. Richards, New Castle; J. H. Addison, Daily; J. H. Cole, Otter Creek; A. W. Rose, Ionia; C. Mitchell, Clark; J. F. Pomeroy, Springbank; P. A. Dempsey, Silver Creek; James Monier, Emerson; Philo Graves, Wakefield; and William Johnson, Logan.

1890 J. F. Pomeroy, Springbank, chairman; A. Drager, Ponca City; M. B. DeWitt, Ponca township; A. H. Ellyson, Ionia; J. H. Addison, Daily; M. A. Vaughn, Galena; R. A. Poole, Emerson; J. W. Hypse, Logan; A. S. Palmer, New Castle; Nels Johnson, Hooker; J. H. Cole, Otter Creek; C.

Mitchell, Clark; P. A. Dempsey, Silver Creek; Philo Graves, Wakefield; and G. O. Acres, Concord.

1891—J. F. Pomeroy, chairman, Springbank; A. Drager, Ponca City; A. Davis, Ponca township; J. H. Addison, Daily; A. S. Palmer, New Castle; Philo Graves, Wakefield; A. H. Ellyson, Ionia; M. C. Vaughn, Galena; P. A. Dempsey, Silver Creek; H. D. Hall, Concord; S. Roberts, Otter Creek; J. Sullivan, Clark; J. W. Hypse, Logan; R. A. Poole, Emerson; A. G. Gran, Hooker.

1892—J. F. Pomeroy, chairman, Springbank; J. D. Stough, Ponca City; A. Davis, Ponca township; Wm. Sweeney, Emerson; F. C. Spannum, Logan; Mathew Conway, Daily; W. J. White, Galena; Thomas Hoy, New Castle; J. B. Pettit, Ionia; A. N. Gran, Hooker; H. D. Hall, Concord; J. Sullivan, Clark; S. Roberts, Otter Creek; Philo Graves, Wakefield; P. A. Dempsey, Silver Creek.

1893—J. D. Stough, Ponca City, Chairman; A Davis, Ponca township; F. Reuter, Logan; Wm. Thompson, Concord; J. Sullivan, Clark; A. N. Gran, Hooker; I. N. Belknap, Wakefield; W. N. White, Galena; C. W. Schram, Silver Creek; H. J. Stinger, Otter Creek; Wm. Sweeney, Emerson; J. F. Pomeroy, Springbank; M. Conway Daily; T. Hoy, New Castle; and J. A. Pettit, Ionia.

1894—J. D. Stough, Ponca City, chairman; Daniel Crowley, Galena; James Tobin, New Castle; Frank A. Hypse, Logan; M. Conway, Daily; W. A. Morgan, Springbank; Wm. Sweeney, Emerson; T. J. Ryan, Ionia; Wm. Thompson, Concord; J. Sullivan, Clark; A. N. Gran, Hooker; I. N. Belknap, Wakefield; C. W. Schram, Silver Creek; A. Davis, Ponca township; H. J. Stinger, Otter Creek.

1895—To October 18 of that year, J. D. Stough, Ponca City, chairman; Daniel Crowley, Galena; James Tobin, New Castle; Frank A. Hypse, Logan; M. Conway, Daily; W. A. Morgan, Springbank; Wm. Sweeney, Emerson; T. J. Ryan, Ionia; Wm. Thompson, Concord; Perry Dempster, Clark; A. N. Gran, Hooker; C. T. Barto, Wakefield; C. W. Schram, Silver Creek; M. B. DeWitt, Ponca township; and H. J. Stinger, Otter Creek.

On October 18, 1895, under the new law relating to supervisions and township organization, the number of supervisors was reduced to seven. These were chosen by lot from



the old board. The supervisors thus chosen were J. D. Stough, representing District No. 1, comprising Ponca City; T. J. Ryan, District No. 2, Ponca Township, Ionia and New Castle; C. W. Schram, District No. 3, Silver Creek, Daily and Hooker; Perry Dempster, District No. 4, Clark, Concord and Logan; C. T. Barto, District No. 5, Wakefield; W. A. Morgan, District No. 6, Springbank and Galena, and Wm. Sweeney, District No. 7, Emerson and Otter Creek. These held their offices until January 1, 1896, and were then succeeded by E. J. Berry, District No. 1; A. S. Palmer, District No. 2; C. W. Schram, District No. 3; C. Wischoff, District No. 4; C. T. Barto, District No. 5; W. A. Morgan, District No. 6, and A. Isenberg, District No. 7.

#### SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS.

W. P. Heydon, 1868 and 1869.

I. N. Rowell, '70 to September 6, when J. K. Addis was appointed to fill the vacancy to the next October election.

S. P. Mikesell in 1871.

W. S. Bates, during 1872, '73, '74 and '75.

J. H. Addison, in '76 '77.

A. S. Palmer, '78, '79, '80.

G. W. Walbeck, '81, '82, '83, '84 and '85.

Dayton Ward, '86, '87, '88, '89.

Miss Mary Schroer, '90, '91, '92, '93, '94, and '95, her term ending January 1, 1896, and was succeeded by Miss Sadie E. Poff.

#### PROBATE AND COUNTY JUDGES.

The first judge was J. B. Denton, who was elected at the first election held in the county in December, 1858.

October, 1859, Leander Davis was elected for two years.

October, 1861, N. S. Porter was elected for two years. He served one year and resigned and E. Serry was appointed to fill the vacancy.

October, 1863, W. P. Heydon, two years.

October, 1865, Edward Serry, two years. He served one year and resigned and on October, 1866, W. P. Heydon was elected to fill the vacancy.

October, 1867, L. T. Hill, two years.

October, 1869, Edward Serry, two years.

October, 1871, J. W. Porter, who held the office during 1872, '73, '74 and '75.

Edward Arnold, 1876 and '77.

R. H. Knapp, 1878 and '79.

W. C. Smith, 1880, '81, '82, '83, '84 and '85.

O. E. Martin, 1886, '87, '88 and '89.

A. Reynolds, 1890, '91, '92 and '93.

A. W. Rose, 1894 and '95, and was re-elected for the term commencing January 1, '96.

#### SHERIFFS.

The first sheriff elected in the county was C. F. Putnam. He was elected in December, 1858, and held the office until October, 1859, when R. H. Wilbur was elected for two years. Mr. Wilbur only retained the office until the next spring, and Richard Higgin was appointed to fill the vacancy, and held the office in 1861. J. Clark, James Barrett and C. F. Putnam, each held the office a part of the time in 1862. Putnam held the office from October, 1862, to October, 1863.

A. Kniss, from October, 1863, to October, 1864.

C. F. Putnam, from October, 1864, to October, 1865. He held the office either as principal or deputy most of the time since the county was organized.

William Bigley, from October, 1865, to October, 1867.

M. B. DeWitt, from October, 1867, through '68, '69, '70, '71, '72, '73.

B. H. Beller, 1874 and 1875.

M. B. DeWitt, 1876 and 1877.

E. H. Jones, 1878, 1879, 1880, 1881, 1882 and 1883.

John F. Pomeroy, 1884 and 1885.

Mark Brown, 1886, 1887, 1888 and 1889.

J. Boeckenhauer, 1890 and 1891.

P. McCabe, 1892, 1893, 1894 and 1895, until January 1, 1896, and was then followed by H. H. Hart.

#### SURVEYORS.

S. H. Coats, 1872, '73, '74 and '75.

J. G. Miller, 1876, '77.

O. P. Sullenberger, 1878 and '79.

G. O. Lampher, 1880, '81.

C. T. Granger, 1882 and '83.

G. O. Lampher, 1884, '85, '86 and '87.

J. W. Jones, 1888.

J. Leonard, 1889.

M. F. Richards, 1890 and '91.

S. B. Stongh, 1892, '93, '94 and to the end of '95.

COUNTY ATTORNEYS.

W. F. Norris was elected for two years, commencing January 1, 1888. He resigned at the end of a year and J. J. McAllister was appointed to fill the vacancy.

A. E. Barnes, 1889 and '90.

J. J. McCarthy, 1891, '92, '93, '94, '95 and '96.

CLERKS OF THE DISTRICT COURT.

James E. Moore, 1892, '93.

J. D. Harris, 1894 and '95 and was succeeded by W. W. Cooper on January 1, '96.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATURE SENT FROM DIXON COUNTY

DISTRICT JUDGES J. B. BARNES AND W. F. NORRIS

SCHOOLS AND SCHOLARS THE FIRST DEED RECORDED IN  
THE COUNTY GRIST MILLS AND SAW MILLS AND OTHER  
MANUFACTORIES.

Those who were sent by Dixon county to the legislature were generally men of the requisite energy and ability to fill the important positions of law makers. Before Nebraska became a state this county was represented in the territorial legislature by three of its citizens, viz: D. T. Bramble, in 1858; N. S. Porter, in 1864, and R. H. Wilbur, in 1865. All these gentlemen did well for their constituents, so well, indeed, that Messrs. Porter and Wilbur were sent there again after stateship was adopted, and Mr. Bramble for his efficient efforts in the organization of the county would undoubtedly have been again elected if he had remained here. He removed to Yankton, where he died a few years ago.

After Nebraska became a state, Mr. Porter was elected state senator in 1866 and again in 1868, and Mr. Wilbur was a representative in 1855. Oliver Baltzley was the representative in 1868, and was followed by Mr. Wilbur in 1872. As to politics, Porter and Baltzley were republicans and Wilbur a democrat.

In the fall of 1876, J. P. Walters, democrat, was elected representative for two years, at the end of which time he was succeeded by W. H. Vanderbilt, republican of Silver Creek.

In 1878 O. P. Sullenberger, democrat, was elected to the senate. He then and since has resided in Ponca. Previously he lived in Ionia and in company with Messrs. Newton and Landon had a large mill there. As senator, as well as in the office of county commissioner, Mr. Sullenberger gave good

satisfaction. He was one of the commissioners at the time the narrow gauge railroad was born.

A. S. Palmer, republican, was elected to the house in 1880 and re-elected in 1882. He was, and is a farmer residing a few miles from New Castle, well educated, able and popular, and frequently served the county in various responsible offices.

W. F. Norris, republican, became senator in 1882. He had been educated at West Point Military Academy and afterwards served in the army several years and until he resigned and came to Ponca to engage in the practice of law.

In 1884, G. W. Waitt, republican, was elected representative. Mr. Waitt was a prominent business man of Wakefield.

He was succeeded in 1886, by P. G. Wright, democrat, a resident of Galena township. Mr. Wright had formerly been a member of the legislature of Iowa, and his experience there as well as his sound judgment and earnest efforts enabled him to pass through the legislative ordeal with credit. Mr. Wright was several times an efficient county commissioner and supervisor. He died at his home near Martinsburg, June 30, 1891. He had been a resident of Dixon county about fourteen years. He was a just and honorable man and had many friends.

In 1888, A. D. Whitford of Springbank, republican, was the representative. Mr. Whitford was a prosperous farmer of Springbank where he had lived since 1871. He was followed by P. F. Rohan, elected in 1890. Mr. Rohan was a member of the party now known as the "populist." He was a farmer living a few miles from New Castle and has resided there many years.

In 1890, H. P. Shumway, republican, one of the most prominent and popular members of that party in the district, was elected to the senate. Mr. Shumway resides in Wakefield where he is conspicuous by his energy and success in business and by his popularity in social life.

In 1892, E. E. Ellis, republican, of Springbank township, was elected representative. He settled in Springbank in 1869 and now has a fine farm of 280 acres three miles from Allen. He was an efficient member of the house.

In 1894, George Matteson, a prominent republican citizen of Ponca township, became representative. Mr. Matteson is a farmer and is an active and successful business man. As a legislator he gave entire satisfaction.

The office of district judge has been successively filled by two citizens of Dixon county:

John B. Barnes, a native of Ohio and a soldier in an Ohio regiment during the war, located in Ponca and was admitted to the bar in 1873. In 1875, he was elected district attorney and served as such until the spring of 1879, when he was appointed district judge by Gov. Nance to fill the vacancy occasioned by the resignation of Judge Valentine, and in the fall of that year he was elected to that office by a large majority. Judge Barnes now resides at Norfolk. He was an able judge and is a successful lawyer having a large practice.

W. F. Norris, who, as previously mentioned, was a state senator for this county one term and afterwards county attorney, was in 1887 elected district judge and in 1891 was re-elected to the same office, his second term expiring January 1, 1896. Judge Norris during his eight years on the bench gained the respect and esteem of the district and earned the reputation of being an honorable and upright judge.

Both Judge Barnes and Judge Norris are republicans and were elected by that party. Politics, however, so far as judges are concerned, is beginning to be regarded by the people of advanced thought as of little importance. If a man has the requisite ability and honesty and is clear headed and impartial, the question whether he believes in a high tariff or low, or is a silver 16 to 1 advocate or a gold bug, cuts no figure, nor does it matter whether he is labelled as democrat, republican or populist.

After having thus briefly alluded to those who have been furnished by Dixon county to fill legislative and judicial offices, the next important matter to notice are the schools, without due instruction in which, legislative and judicial honors would be few indeed.

As to the schools in Dixon county in an early day, there is on that subject as on many others pertaining to county affairs, a most discouraging lack of information. That there were schools during the first few years of the county, there

can be no doubt, and good ones too, judging from the intelligence of those whose youth was spent here.

In 1869 there were ten school districts and two hundred and twenty-nine children of school age in the county. In 1870 there were twelve school districts and three hundred and thirty-four scholars; in 1871, seventeen districts and five hundred and sixty-five scholars, and in 1872, twenty-one districts and seven hundred and six scholars. This rapid increase it is needless to follow. Suffice it to say that schools and scholars were growing in numbers in proportion to the growth of everything else in the county. As a matter of course, at such a rate of speed, such numbers have now swelled into quite gigantic proportions.

At this time, (fall of 1895), instead of ten school districts and two hundred and twenty-nine scholars as in 1869, Dixon county has seventy-eight school districts, ninety-three schools, about one hundred teachers and three thousand, four hundred and sixty-four scholars.

Such are the figures furnished by Miss Schroer the accomplished superintendent of public instruction.

Every summer since 1878 a teachers' institute has been held, during which the services of some of the best and most advanced instructors in the state are obtained, and those designing to teach in the county are required by the superintendent to attend. At the institute held this year (1895) one hundred and nine teachers were in attendance.

With such earnest efforts to have competent teachers, it is needless to say that Dixon county has good schools and as a consequence good scholars.

What a wonderful contrast there is between the schools of the present west and their improved methods of instruction, and the old fashioned "deestriet" schools of New York and New England, thirty-five years ago.

A few "odds and ends" entirely disconnected and not appropriately fitting into any other chapter we will insert here, as some or all of them may be of interest.

The first deed made and recorded in Dixon county after its organization in 1858, was from Wm. Bigley to Murtha Gorman. The deed was dated December 21, 1859, (a short time after the first election of county officers) and was re-

corded February 22, 1859. The amount of land conveyed was 120 acres.

Dixon county's large tracts of timber along the Missouri and the generally great and certain crops of wheat and corn, brought about the establishing, from first to last, of numerous grist and saw mills.

Whitecomb's saw mill on the river bottom near Ponca was the pioneer and was followed by the grist mill of Stough Brothers at Ponca and the mill of L. T. Hill at Ionia, all of which have been previously described.

Among the saw mills in the timber along the Missouri was that of Joseph Stobaugh near Ionia in '68, and that of Elias Warner in '69 which latter has continued to this time. A saw mill on the Aoway, about two miles below Ponca, was built by Jonathan Martin in 1870.

George Matteson, from 1874 to a few years ago, was engaged extensively in that business. His mill was in the timber near the river, and between Ponca and Ionia.

All the above mills were run by steam power excepting Stough Brothers' mill at Ponca and Martin's mill two miles below. The mill at Ponca, when the country became older and the increase of business demanded it, developed into the extensive roller mills built by Stough and Mikesell and afterwards owned by the Ponca Mill Company. Steam and water were both used as motive powers. The mill was burned in the winter of 1893 and has not been rebuilt.

Afterwards a large steam flouring mill was built in Ponca by the Messrs. Crew which in January, 1895, burned.

At Wakefield is the well known flouring mill of J. O. Milligan. It does an immense business and is under excellent management. There is also a large mill at Emerson and another at Dixon. The mill at Martinsburg and the new mill at New Castle are first-class in machinery and have a large patronage.

In connection with mills for making lumber and flour other manufacturing establishments may be here appropriately mentioned.

In Ionia, T. J. Ryan has a steam syrup factory fitted up with the best machinery and latest improvements, in which he made about five thousand gallons of sorghum syrup in '94 and the same in '95.



At Dixon a very large creamery has been in successful operation for a year past, and at Waterbury another was completed in the summer of '95. There are also several smaller establishments of the same kind in various parts of the county and doing good business. All such institutions are generally made profitable to the owners and they are certainly a help to the county at large.

The immense water powers along South Creek, Aoway and Logan, are capable of turning many more wheels than they now do, and it is to be hoped the time is not distant when the water of those rapid streams, now in a great measure going to waste, will be utilized.

In addition to excellent schools the county has many churches and benevolent societies. The rude school and church buildings of the pioneers, as good as they could have at that time, have given place to structures wherein refinement and good taste are conspicuous. All the various educational, moral and intellectual efforts in the county have been added to and improved from year to year, and now it is hardly possible to find a better condition of society than Dixon county is favored with.

As the pioneers and old settlers look back to the hardships they passed through in early days, they see the marked contrast between what life was then and what it is now. And while amid their former hard but adventurous frontier life they probably enjoyed as much real happiness as at the present time, they realize that in material comforts and educational and social advantages the present is superior to the past.

This county, since its organization, suffered from a grasshopper raid in 1874 and a severe drouth in 1864, and another and milder drouth in 1894, thirty years after. This is a good showing; three bad years out of the thirty-nine years of the county. Such drawbacks occurring only at long intervals, are no excuse for despair. There is no country which has less failures of crops and the great majority have more.

## CHAPTER XV.

## PONCA CITY—ITS PAST AND PRESENT.

In the preceding pages, the gradual growth of Ponca from a houseless town site to a brisk business town is seen. As previously stated, the location is most favorable for a large place, being at the junction of the valleys of South Creek and Aoway, and surrounded by a rich agricultural country.

The proprietors of Ponca were not only wise in making its location near the timber and at the confluence to two such fertile valleys as Aoway and South Creek, thereby to a great extent commanding the trade of both and of their tributaries, but they showed good judgment in the selection of a place where is a water power which surpasses any on this side of the Missouri within a hundred miles. With these natural advantages, a prosperous future was reasonably expected.

Its growth was slow for many years. Its plat of 320 acres looked forlorn in its solitude, and though big in its framework was most lean and lank in its filling. It did indeed move ahead slow. So slow that for several years it required a marvellous imagination to see that it moved at all. In 1873, seventeen years after it first saw light, Ponca had a population of possibly 200. At that length of time ago, a Sabbath day quiet brooded over the town, which was then a mere hamlet compared with what it now is. Then, what little there was of it, was quickly seen. As you crossed the bridge, coming from Sioux City, you saw Mr. Bigley's hotel, (the Valley House,) and Stough & Brothers' grist mill, and as you passed on you came successively to F. Gould's grocery, the county clerk's office, the stores of S. Gamble and Stough & Mikesell, the which, together with two or three shops, comprised the business part of the place. Its dwelling houses were few, and all its business establishments from its stores down to its blacksmith shop could be counted on the fingers of the two hands.

From 1873 to 1876 the town improved a little faster than before. Another blacksmith shop was started. Somebody also built a barn. A lean-to was added to the town grocery. One man built a new fence and painted his house. Another proposed, in the bright near future, to build a hog house. Thus enjoying present prosperity and anticipations of the future, Ponca drifted along the stream of time.

When the narrow gauge railroad arrived, the town moved a little faster than before, though not as rapidly as it would with a more desirable road. When that road, after a few years, fell into the hands of a rich and energetic company and was built over and given standard gauge, new iron and better cars, Ponca really had for the first time, the prosperity which a good road brings. Its growth, hitherto slow, rapidly increased, and new enterprises and new arrivals of people became frequent.

From year to year its energy and good fortune continued. Old business houses and residences surrendered their locations to those which were more commodious and elegant. The spacious brick store which Stough & Mikesell built in 1877, established the popularity of brick for buildings and such within a few years took the place of many of the humble business structures of earlier days.

Now, the four corners at the intersection of East and Third streets, are adorned by large blocks, fully equal to what are usual in very much larger towns. From that intersection west along Third street, and south on East street, business buildings thus elegantly constructed, are with few exceptions general.

The first brick store built by Stough & Mikesell, has doubled its former size. From there along the north side of Third street, is almost a continuous line of elegant business houses to Ionia street where S. P. Mikesell's palatial establishment is located. The same splendid array of buildings is seen on much of the opposite side of Third street and on East street. This part of town where the Stoughs, Mikesell, Davey and Gamble do business, is nearly every day a crowded scene of activity.

At the foot of East street stood the great mill built by Stough and Mikesell, and which was burned nearly three years ago. It was an imposing structure, and added greatly

to the business and business look of the place. With so fine a waterpower it is likely that another mill will, ere long, be built there.

Outside the business part of town many fine residences claim attention. Good taste has generally prevailed in building them and in the arrangements around them. Twenty-five years ago the entire town could not boast of more than a score of trees; now it has at least ten thousand. They fill most of the lots which are occupied and beautify the sides of nearly every street. These, with the shrubbery, vines, gardens and flower beds, and the neatness displayed in all, have made Ponca homelike and enjoyable. Pictures of a few of such fine residences are seen in this book and each tells a story of refinement.

The same good taste is displayed in the building and adornment of the churches, in the school houses and grounds around them, in the grading of the streets, in the building and repair of sidewalks and crossings, and in the clean and orderly methods by which the whole are supervised. All this has been the gradual outcome of a slow growth of twenty-five years. The other fine towns of the county will in a short time enjoy the same attractive adornments, indeed, with the energy and ambition of the residents, the question of trees, vines, flowers and shrubbery is only one of the time required for their growth.

Let us briefly glance over the business men in Ponca. It will be seen that they cannot be counted on the fingers as in 1873.

The general stores are those of Stough Bros., S. P. Mikesell, J. M. Davey, M. F. Gamble and Drager Bros.

Of these, the Stough Bros., Mikesell and Davey have been in business many years. Stough and Mikesell commenced as partners in 1869 in the store on Third street now occupied by Eames & Searing, and removed in 1877 to their brick store then recently finished. They dissolved in 1886, Mr. Stough retaining the location and soon after Mr. Mikesell built the fine place he has since occupied. Mr. Davey has been in the mercantile business twenty years, and has a large establishment on East street. Mr. Gamble came here in 1872 and was clerk for S. Gamble and Stough & Mikesell until January, 1881, and has since been in business for himself. He has a





LUTHERAN CHURCH. PONCA.



DR. S. B. STOUGH'S RESIDENCE.





commodious store on East street. Drager Bros. occupy the store on the southwest corner of East and Third streets.

Eames & Searing, R. P. Armstrong, A. O. Bladen, I. Conner and A. W. Beeson have well stocked stores for groceries, notions, etc. Eames & Searing commenced in 1890, and now do a large business. Mr. Bladen opened his store in April, 1895, and Mr. Beeson in February, 1894. Mr. Armstrong came to Dixon county in the fall of 1870 and located on a homestead in Clark township, and several years later removed to Ponca, and in September, 1883, opened his present store. Charles Schroer commenced with a bakery in 1885, and in connection has now a restaurant and a good business and location.

Ponca's has three good hotels, viz: The Valley House, the "Hotel Rakow" and the Merchants. The Valley House is the oldest hotel in town. It was bought of Leander Davis many years ago by Wm. Bigley and kept until his death in 1878, and since by his widow Mrs. Bigley. Mr. and Mrs. Bigley were among the early settlers and their hotel was a prominent and popular stopping place. The "Hotel Rakow" is a large and elegant brick building on Third street, bought by A. F. Rakow in April, 1895, of J. F. Smith. The Merchants Hotel was built nineteen years ago and is now owned by Geo. Bolton, formerly of Daily Branch. There was a fourth hotel, the Central House, a commodious and popular establishment, built by S. Gamble in 1877. It was burned in January, 1895, and Mr. Rakow, the proprietor, afterwards purchased the "Hotel Rakow" as above stated.

Among its prosperous institutions, Ponca has three drug stores, two millinery establishments, two hardware stores, a furniture store, a harness shop, two markets, etc.

The oldest drug store in town is that of T. R. Orr. It was started in 1876 by L. Kryger and afterwards sold to M. O. Ayers, and by him in 1878, disposed to Mr. Orr who came from Chicago a short time before. With the exception of about two years, he has continued the business ever since. His partner is F. G. Hebron who came here in 1884. Another drug store is that of J. D. Forbes who bought it in the spring of 1893 and has since continued it. Another popular druggist is W. M. Mahoney who purchased in October, 1893, the

drug store of N. Haum. These three establishments are large and well managed.

The oldest millinery store is that of Mrs. M. B. Higgins who commenced about nineteen years ago, and another store of the kind has been kept by Miss Rogers several years.

As to the hardware stores, that of Wm. Auge is the oldest in town. Mr. Auge came to Dixon county in November, 1867, and located on a farm in Silver Creek. From there he moved to Ponca eighteen years ago, and engaged in the hardware business with James Hobbs. Seven years afterwards Mr. Hobbs retired, and Mr. Auge, (with an interval of one year,) continued the business from that time to this with great success. Mr. Auge is president of the Security Bank of Ponca and is a prosperous and reliable citizen. Mr. Hobbs came to Ponca about twenty-four years ago and was in the hardware business most of the time until he sold out to Mr. Auge. He went to Gilroy, Cal., since then, and is engaged in fruit raising. The other hardware store in Ponca, is that of L. Baltzly who has had it several years.

The furniture store is that of J. A. Mohr who commenced that business in the spring of 1886 with James Hobbs, and since 1887 has continued it alone and with a prosperous trade.

Ponca's harness establishment is owned by E. J. Berry, who, with his father, came here from Illinois in March, 1873, and commenced that business in 1882. For that purpose he had a fine building on East street, which in January, '95 was burned with most of its contents. He has since rebuilt. Mr. Berry was mayor in 1888 and has served as councilman several terms. He is now the supervisor of the first district of the county.

The oldest market in town is owned by Lister & Logan who have been together in business since 1887. J. H. Logan came here in 1878 from Dakota county, and has been engaged in buying grain much of the time. He was appointed postmaster by President Harrison and gave entire satisfaction during his term of four years. His partner Wm. Lister came from Illinois in May, 1875, and has been in the market business most of the time since 1879. Has been mayor of the city two terms and is a reliable and much esteemed citizen. Speaking of the mayoralty we will state





WM. HUSE.



MRS. WM. HUSE.



that his next door neighbor in business, Mr. Searing, of the firm of Eames & Searing, also was one of Ponca's most popular and efficient mayors, his term ending in May, 1895.

The most prominent dealer in farm machinery is August Bauer who came to Ponca in 1881 and commenced business the same year. He has two large buildings on Third street (115 by 25 feet and 70 by 28 feet,) both of which are occupied by an extensive stock. Has been councilman of the Third ward for two years, and is a good business man.

Wm. Groth, commenced in 1883 in the business of making cigars and has been prosperous and successful. His building is on East street.

Ponca's jeweler is E. W. Gray, who first came here in 1883, was absent from '84 to '91, since when he has had a successful business in his line.

The two barber shops are those of A. M. Coats, commenced in 1883, and G. P. Kauffman in 1892. Both are good citizens and shave with keen razors. Mr. Coats does business in a large brick building which he built on Third street a few years ago.

Ponca had three banks, the First National, Dixon County and Security, up to 1893 when the First National bank went up the spout to the distress of depositors and the disgrace of its managers. The Bank of Dixon county was started in 1881 and the Security bank in 1890.

One of Ponca's prominent young men is T. A. Berry who came here in 1890 and has since been manager of the Edwards and Bradford Lumber Company at this place, and in the large business he transacts has become very popular.

H. C. Howe, who came here in 1881, and M. I. Mellon in 1885, the former the cashier of the Dixon county bank and the latter filling a similar position in the Security bank, are among Ponca's progressive young men of business.

G. C. Hamilton, the photographer, located here in 1888 and has since remained. A number of his excellent pictures are seen in this history.

The lumber dealers are Edwards & Bradford and Francis & Son. An advertisement for Edwards & Bradford is on one of the last pages of this book.

The music store is kept by E. H. Dierenfield and was started by him two or three years ago.

The livery stables are those of H. C. Fields and C. E. Paull, who have been thus engaged several years.

The principal flour and feed store is that of Wm. Sheffel who came here with his father, Emanuel Sheffel, from Germany in 1868. His brother, Peter Sheffel, came in 1864. The Sheffels have most of the time since then been in the mill business, and from 1877 to 1882 were the owners with Julius Drager of the mill built by Stough Brothers in 1860.

Ponca has three newspapers. The oldest is the Northern Nebraska Journal which was started January, 1873, by Wm. Huse and has since been continued by him, a part of the time in partnership with his son, W. N. Huse, now of the Norfolk Daily News. The present owners of the Journal are Wm. Huse and his son, E. W. Huse. The Journal was the first paper ever published in the county and for several years was the only one. In 1877 the Ponca Courier was commenced by Smith Brothers and afterwards passed through the hands of various proprietors, until it was removed to Wayne soon after that town was born. Since then there have been several papers published in Ponca, some of which have had encouraging success. Those in town now, aside from the Journal, are the Gazette and Leader.

There are many other branches of business carried on in Ponca, aside from those above named. Gustav Franz has a shoe shop. There are also several blacksmith and wagon shops, a tailor shop, and the billiard halls of Trimborn & Higgins and McManus & Keefe.

H. E. Smith has for several years had a prosperous business in buying and shipping butter and eggs. M. M. Myres, Daniel Doulin, Michael Doulin, F. Conrad and C. H. Marble do the draying and do it well.

Near the south end of East street is the store of John Green who came a few years ago from the Black Hills where he was extensively engaged in mining. His father was one of Dixon county's pioneers.

On East street also, P. E. Rush has a notion store. Mr. Rush is a very skillful brick-layer as many of Ponca's fine buildings illustrate.

Speaking of brick, the brick yards of the Nelsons and







J. J. MCCARTHY'S RESIDENCE.



DR. J. W. PORTER

(See page 180.)



that of Gen. Harrison a short distance north of town, manufacture all that are needed.

Ponca's postmaster is R. R. MacMullen, who was appointed by President Cleveland about a year ago. Major MacMullen is an old army officer with an honorable record and is an excellent postmaster. Among the postmasters in the past have been N. S. Porter, E. D. Higgins, A Reynolds, Harry Dorsey, W. T. Chapman, I. Conner, J. H. Logan and after him the present incumbent. The office has in the past twenty years increased largely in business and is now a presidential office.

This being a county seat, it is the natural home of attorneys. Among the first were Barnes Brothers and W. E. Gantt, who did a leading business for several years. The present attorneys are J. J. McCarthy, A. E. Barnes, J. M. Hench, A. G. Kingsbury, C. A. Kingsbury, J. V. Pearson and T. J. Welty.

Concerning J. J. McCarthy a more extended notice is given elsewhere. A. E. Barnes came here in 1877 from Ohio; studied law in the office of his brother Judge Barnes and was afterwards one of the firm. He is now one of the most prominent and successful lawyers in this part of the state. J. M. Hench, a well-read and able lawyer, came to Allen from the east in 1893 and from there to Ponca in 1894, since when he has been in the office with Mr. Barnes and has had a first-class practice. A. G. Kingsbury has been in practice since 1877 except one year while at Ann Arbor law school, where he graduated in 1895. C. A. Kingsbury studied law with A. G. Kingsbury and was admitted a few years ago. T. J. Welty, also became an attorney several years ago, and has recently opened an office. John V. Pearson, who graduated at the Ann Arbor law school a year ago, was in the office of J. J. McCarthy until August, 1895, when he became one of the teachers of the Ponca high school.

The most prominent of those in the insurance business in Ponca are C. J. Story, R. R. MacMullen and W. W. Cooper.

Here are the names of a few of the old settlers, most of whom are not elsewhere mentioned. Nearly all were identified with Ponca village, though a few resided in Ponca township:

Joseph Walters, elected by accident to legislature in '76.

C. W. Todd, machinist and builder, '58 to '90. Helen M. Todd, sister, of some literary ability and teacher in music, now in Vermont; C. W. is in Wyoming. James Rucker, father-in-law to John Enders, came here in '67, now in Washington. C. M. Drake, '70 to '74, had a collegiate course and given much to music, natural philosophy and evolution, is now in California and is devoting his time to study. Dr. J. K. Addis, '69 to death in '74. John Lawrence, '69, now in Wayne county. Oliver Baltzley, member of legislature '68, carpenter and builder, now in southern part of Nebraska. Kreiger, druggist. Avery Barber and family, '67, died in '92. LaFollette, M. Wigton. W. B. Douthit, Mr. Fero, first harness shop, '70, returned to New York in '74; his son John now here. C. W. Smith, '69, resides here now. W. C. Smith, former county judge. Wesley Mattison, came in '65, died in '93, wagon maker and mechanic. J. W. Jones, real estate agent, '79, now in Missouri. Frederic Higgins and family, '70, died in '88. Geo. Russel, from Independence, Iowa, '70, died in '94. J. McQuaid, '70, died in '91. William McDonald, '70, died in '77. B. O. Smith, '68, died in '87. James Smith, his son, now resides in Dakota county. Geo. Conrad, '67, died in '93; his wife still living. Charles B. Conrad, '67, moved to Iowa in '94. Wm. Henchbarger, '64 to '89. A. G. Wheeler, '68, went to Australia in '95. Joseph Porter, '67, died February, '68; wife, Martha, died in '70. W. Freeburn, '69, moved to Washington Territory in '77. Rev. Walter Clark, '71. J. Peters, '71 to '92. Lorenzo Smith, '67 to present time. James Hammell, mason and bricklayer, '60. J. Perrigone and J. Brewer, philosophers and explorers. Dr. Hughes and family, '75 to '77. Ed. Healy, lawyer. A. A. Porter, furniture store and builder, '68 to '95.

In addition to the above, some of those doing business here during a part or all the time since 1870, but now dead, moved away or gone into other business, were: J. P. Hingtgen, merchant; F. M. Hewett, bricklayer; F. Pletsch and J. Volkmar, boots and shoes; Mr. Gallagher, tailor; J. U. LaFollette, wagon maker; C. W. Bates, G. D. Russell, F. N. Johnson and W. Hunter, blacksmiths; J. Krause and Chas. Metz, harness makers; Dean Paleu, John Lawrence, A. A. Thompson and Mr. Green, livery; H. Ernst and A. and F. A.

Porter, furniture; S. Gamble, Fred Gould, C. S. Ford and J. A. Mikesell, merchants; T. C. West, Rose & Potter and Dr. Wyckoff, druggists; A. H. Gould, hardware; E. and E. Harding, B. W. Powers, E. D. Higgins, O. M. Childs, Miss West, groceries and restaurants; Stough Bros. & Welty, bankers; O. P. Sullenberger, Central House; J. F. Myers, Valley House; Jones & Moore, W. P. Heydon, J. Leach, D. Hurley and J. W. Radford, farm machinery; C. L. Parke, musical instruments; Mrs. Addis and Miss Feauto, millinery; Leach & Drew, wheat buyers; the Herley Bros., lime burners; Guy R. Wilbur and W. E. Butler, lawyers; Dr. Rowe, physician; etc., etc.

We have been able to obtain brief histories of a few of the pioneers who first settled in Ponca and vicinity and also of some of the later generation.

Among them was Wm. Bigley Jr., who lived in Ponca and vicinity twenty-one years and died here, March 27, 1878. He was born in County Westmeath, Ireland, and came to Philadelphia, Pa., when he was nine years old and remained there until he came to this county. He and his brother, James Bigley, (an account of whose murder at Sioux City has been given in a preceding chapter) were men of activity and push, and greatly helped the growth of the town and county. At his death Wm. Bigley left a wife and three children, and James Bigley a wife.

Another early settler was Edward Serry. He came from Iowa in 1856 and first located on a claim (near John Roden's place) five miles from Ponca. He was the first clerk of the Squatters Club and court, which ruled this part of the country for several years. One of his duties under squatter rule was to allot half a section of land to every new settler. This held good only until the land was surveyed and brought into market in 1857. Mr. Serry was county clerk several terms and in that office became very popular. He died about twenty-five years ago leaving a wife and several children, the oldest of whom, John Serry, now lives in Vermillion, S. D.

H. A. Fuller and Frank West have been briefly mentioned in a previous chapter. Fuller went away in '61.

The Stough Brothers, viz: John Stough, Dr. S. B.

Stough and Jacob Stough came here, the first two in '56 and the latter in '57.

John Stough was born in Westmorland county, Penn., September 12, 1828. He was raised on a farm, and in 1852 moved to Ohio. In '54 and '55 he taught school in Tuscaroras county, that state. In 1856 came to Ponca where he has nearly all the time since been one of the most prominent of the business men in farming, merchandise, milling, building and various other useful enterprises, among which, during a few years past he has had a large interest in an extensive cold storage establishment in Sioux City. As a matter of course, good management has given success and he is now considered one of the wealthiest citizens of the county. Mr. Stough was married in 1862 to Elisabeth Ernst. Have had seven children, three of whom are now living. In county and city affairs, Mr. Stough has been safe and reliable in the matters intrusted to his care. He was one of the county commissioners for five years, (1865 to and including 1869), and was mayor of Ponca for two years.

S. B. Stough, born September 13, 1826, and like his brothers, was raised on a farm. He came to Nebraska in 1856, a few months before his brother John. Like him he has been engaged in various pursuits and with profitable results. Across the Missouri in Dakota he had for several years a large mill which did an extensive business. He was also connected with a bank at Elk Point and until a year ago was president of the Security bank at Ponca. In company with John and Jacob Stough, he has been in the mercantile and milling business in Ponca. All these with farming, building, and his duties as surveyor for the county most of the time, have given him active life. Dr. Stough was married in 1861 to Helena Ernst. They have had five children, four of whom are living. They live in a fine house on Third street, a picture of which is given herein.

Jacob Stough, born in 1832, came here in 1857 and has been indented with his brothers in business most of the time since. Like them he is wealthy and is one of the heavy stockholders of the Security bank. He was married to Anna Sheffel, and has two children.

J. D. Stough and Wm. Stough, the sons of John Stough, ably manage the large store of Stough Brothers. J. D.







JOHN STOUGH.

(See page 160.)



MRS. JOHN STOUGH.

(See page 166.)



Stough has a fine business education and is very popular in the county. For two years he has been chairman of the board of supervisors, and was this fall, 1895, elected county treasurer.

Judge Edward Arnold was born near Cork, Ireland, May 1, 1822. Came to New York in 1845, and soon after moved to Massachusetts, where for several years he was engaged in cotton manufacturing. Came to Ponca in spring of 1857. At the time he came, Ponca was a part of Dakota county, and he was elected in the fall of '57, superintendent of public instruction for that county. Was first clerk of Dixon county after its organization in 1858. In '62, enlisted in Company 1, First Nebraska Cavalry, and served twelve months. In '76 and '77, was the first judge under the new constitution. Was a man of fine education and ability, and was prominent in county and town affairs. Had a large farm where he resided many years and up to the time of his death, about a mile west of Ponca. He died in 1893, greatly respected and regretted by the citizens of the county. He left a wife and two sons.

Francis Freeman, came to Ponca in '57, and lived there to the time of his death, May 5, 1886. Age, 73 years. He was a worthy and honest citizen with many friends. Two of his daughters now live in the residence he built on Front street.

Wm. Loug, formerly a soldier, came to Ponca about 1865 and became clerk for Wm. and James Bigley in their hotel and store. He was a good penman and was well acquainted with western business, and was a clear headed and influential helper in building up the place. He moved away in 1870 and now lives in the southern part of the state.

Another of the first settlers of Ponca and Dixon county was E. M. Bisbee. He was born at Westfield, Chautauqua county, New York, and lived there and at Jamestown, N. Y., until in company with N. S. Porter and C. W. Todd, he came to Ponca, arriving in 1858, where he resided most of the time until his death, March 27, 1893, aged about 61 years. When he first came here he found few white people and towns, and generally an uncultivated country. It was the home of Indians and buffaloes and remote from eastern civilization and society. For a number of years he was a farmer and also worked at his trade of millright. He gradually saw the country around

him settle up and improve, saw the Indian and buffalo disappear, farms opened and cultivated, and houses, churches and towns built. In 1863, he was unanimously elected county clerk and held the office until 1865, and afterwards from October, 1870, to October, 1871, and from 1876 to 1885. It was not very a lucrative office at first, and the records required no safes or vaults, and in fact needed no other office than his hat; hence, as it was a frontier custom to wear one's hat during all waking hours, it could be safely said that "Honest Old Ned," as he was called, was always in his office and ready for business. At his death he left a wife and six sons and daughters, of whom five are now living, viz: Mrs. J. N. Hoskinson, Mrs. E. C. Ollerman and Mrs. F. Hebron, and Carl and Clarence Bisbee.

John M. Davey, now and for many years an honorable merchant and citizen of Ponca, was born in Washington county, Wisconsin, in 1845 and lived in that state until his twenty-eighth year. He then came to Nebraska, and located on Elk Creek, Dakota county. After two years, he removed to Ponca, (1875,) where he has been in the mercantile business most of the time since. His large store, (25 by 90 feet,) is on East street, and from the first he has had a large patronage and a wide circle of friends. Mr. Davey married thirty-three years ago a lady who died at the end of six years. His present wife, to whom he was married nineteen years ago, was Mary McCormick whose parents resided in Dakota county. He has had ten children, three by his first wife and seven by his second. Mr. Davey has an attractive and homelike residence just outside of Ponca. In financial affairs he has been very successful and is now a large land owner in Dakota and Dixon counties.

N. S. Porter was born in 1832 in the town of Poland, Chautauqua county, N. Y. Lived in that county until 20 years old, and then with his father went to Pennsylvania to build mills. Stayed there three years and returned to Jamestown and was foreman in the mill business until 1857. Then with E. M. Bisbee and C. W. Todd came west. They spent the winter of 1857-'58 in Wisconsin, and in '58 came to Ponca, and soon after he bought the claim he now lives on. From '58 to '70, worked mainly at mill building. Was married in 1868 to Louisa Tiffany of Jamestown, N. Y. Have had four





JOHN M. DAVEY.

(See page 100.)





MRS. J. M. DAVEY.

(See page 106.)



children, three sons and one daughter, two of whom, Albert and Joseph are now living. His wife died November 16, 1883. In '62 and '63 he enlisted and helped to recruit and organize Company I of the First Nebraska Cavalry. Was mustered out in fall of '63. In '64 was a member of the territorial legislature, and in '66 was elected senator to the state legislature and re-elected in '68. Was in the mercantile business with S. Gamble or alone, in '69, '70, '71. Was county commissioner four years and was elected inspector of prisons for two year. From '79 was agent at the Fort Peck Indian Agency, Montana, for four years; was appointed by President Cleveland, in 1886, to allot lands to Indians on Indian territory and re-appointed by President Harrison and served three years. Has since remained at Ponca. Mr. Porter has had a busy and responsible life.

Samuel Gamble, was one of the early settlers of Northern Nebraska. First residing in Dakota county and afterwards and up to the time of his death in Dixon, he was in both for many years a prominent citizen, closely connected with their history, enterprise and business. He was born August 8, 1817, in Westmorland county, Penn., grew to manhood there, and lived in that county more than half his life. Was married April 22, 1842, to Mrs. Eleanor McCauley Adair, with whom, sixteen years afterwards, in 1856, he removed to Dakota county, this state. At the time of his death, September 2, 1888, he had been a resident of Nebraska for over thirty-one years, and it may be assumed that like all first settlers of a new country, he and his wife endured for a time, perhaps for years, the privations and hardships incident to frontier life. In 1866 he was afflicted by the death of his wife, who died on the 20th of April of that year, after a married life of about twenty-four years. During his residence in Dakota county, Mr. Gamble's correct business methods and merits in whatever position he was placed, gained him from the first, the confidence of the citizens. He was for several years a county commissioner, and afterwards was sheriff for six years. In 1862 he enlisted in Company I of the First Nebraska Cavalry, and as quartermaster served thirteen months. During his service his regiment was most of the time on the western frontier assisting to quell the Indian outbreak which was then so

desperate, especially in Minnesota and parts of Dakota, and which occasioned the wildest terror and panic in the then sparsely settled counties of North Nebraska. In 1867, Mr. Gamble married Miss Celestie Manard. In that year he removed to Ponca and engaged in the mercantile business which he continued until 1877.

R. H. Pomeroy, was born in Steuben county, N. Y., September 19, 1844. Landed in Dixon county, September 19, 1868. Located on the southwest quarter of section 21, township 28, range 5, (Springbank township.) The 160 acres he first took he still retains. Was county commissioner three years, ('81, '82, '83) and has been county treasurer two terms, his present term ending in January, 1896. Mr. Pomeroy has been an influential and useful citizen for the county. Mainly through his efforts, the attempt to rebond the county to pay the old narrow gauge railroad bonds was defeated, thereby saving the county near \$100,000. He was married, March 15, 1868, to Agatha D. Chapel, of Springgrove, Wis. They have had five children, four of whom are living.

Harriet A. Pomeroy, daughter of R. H. Pomeroy, was appointed deputy treasurer, January 7, 1892, and has held it four years, fulfilling the duties with entire success.

John McKinley was born in County Antrim, Ireland, in 1833. He came across the ocean in '51, and for a while was at Williamsburg, N. Y., where he shoveled dirt and graded streets. From there he went to Connecticut, near New Haven, and worked on a farm and in a saw mill. Returned to New York again and quarried stone one winter. Then went to Philadelphia; worked at various things there and out in the country until 1857, when he came to Dixon county. First took a claim on the Jourdan branch (in the South Creek region), and held it down a year, and then went to St. Louis, Mo., and from there to New Orleans and other places in Louisiana. Returned here and entered 160 acres seven miles from Ponca, up West Creek, and lived there four or five years. Then traded that place for the one he now lives on adjoining Ponca. He has 280 acres. He was a reliable and efficient county commissioner and held that office three years, '77, '78, '79. He was married in 1861 and has one son and three daughters.





R. H. POMEROY.

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MRS. R. H. POMEROY.

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J. J. McCarthy was born in Dane county, Wis., 1857, and lived on a farm except when at school. When 19 years old he commenced teaching mathematics in the Albion (Wis.) Academy, where there were fifteen teachers and 300 scholars. Taught two years. When 21 years old he came to David City, Neb., and taught school and studied law. In 1882, came to Emerson and went into the law and real estate business. Built a residence and store, and Emerson's first newspaper office, and was connected with its first paper, the "Emerson Echo." Has been in the mercantile business at Emerson, with Theodore Kantz for several years past, and president of the German American Bank since it started in 1892. Married June, 1884, to Nelly McGowan of Seward county, Neb. Have five children, all living. Elected county attorney in 1890 and has held it ever since, his present term expiring a year hence. Removed to Ponca in 1889. As county attorney he has been thorough and successful, and has given excellent satisfaction.

John A. Mohr was born in Clayton county, Iowa, and in Clayton and Delaware counties lived twenty-six years, during the last few years of which he was largely engaged in manufacturing and bridge building. He removed to Ponca in September, 1881, and has remained here, actively occupied since then. He was engaged in merchandise three and one-half years, and afterwards in 1886, went into the furniture business with James Hobbs. In 1887, he bought out Mr. Hobbs, and has since continued in the same business. During the time, he also built a great number of the excellent bridges which the board of supervisors have wisely supplied the county. Mr. Mohr was mayor of Ponca during one year, from May, '93, to May, '94, and has been on the school board seven years, (all of the time except one year as director,) and his present term expires two years hence. He was married in February, 1885, to Maggie J. McKinley, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John McKinley of Ponca, and has two children boys. Mr. Mohr has been very popular with the citizens by reason of his efforts in advocating improvements and enterprises which were beneficial to the city and county. He has done a large and honorable business and his store has an immense stock of goods and a great community of patrons.

Asa W. Rose was born in Norwich, Connecticut, in 1847. His parents removed to Muscatine, Iowa, in 1854, where they resided for one year when they removed by team to what is now Rock Falls in Cerro Gordo county, Iowa, and two years later settled upon their farm near Plymouth in same county until 1866. The subject of this sketch enlisted in Company M, 1st Iowa cavalry and served two years and eight months and was discharged at St. Louis at the close of the war, when he returned home, and the next year with his parents removed to Union county, Dakota, where they settled upon homesteads in the western part of the county on the banks of the Missouri, opposite the town of Ionia. In 1868, he was married to Almira J. Bishop, who died a few months later. In the winter of 1869 he removed to Ionia, where he with a Mr. Leavens opened a general store. In December, 1870, he was married to Carrie L. Hill, daughter of L. T. Hill of Ionia, where they resided until 1889, when they removed to Ponca township, where they have since resided. In January, 1893, Mr. Rose was appointed county judge pro tem, by the board of county supervisors during the illness of Judge Reynolds, and in July of the same year upon the death of Judge Reynolds was appointed county judge. In the fall of the same year was elected to the same office and in November, 1895, was again elected, breaking the record and receiving the largest vote ever cast for any one man in Dixon county.

Carrie L. Rose, the eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. L. T. Hill, was born in Boston, Mass., in 1853. With her parents, came to Davenport, Iowa, in '56 and to Ionia in '59, where in '70 she was married to Asa W. Rose. In the spring of 1892, Mrs. Rose with her children removed to Soquel, Cal., in the hopes that the health of their eldest daughter Alice E. Rose might be benefitted. Their hopes were not realized, for in October of the same year she died at that place, aged 20 years. Mrs. Rose and children remained at Soquel until the fall of 1894 when they returned to Ponca.

M. F. Richards came here from McHenry county, Mich., in 1885, and is a most reliable resident. He has been city marshal, and for a year past deputy sheriff, and has been appointed deputy by Sheriff Hart for the term commencing Jan. 1, '96.





JUDGE A. W. ROSE.

(See page 178.)



MRS. A. W. ROSE.

(See page 178.)



W. W. Cooper was born in Sauk county, Wisconsin, July 8, 1860. His father owned a large farm on which he worked until the age of 21. He attended common school winters and worked on the farm the balance of the year, till 17 years old, when he finished the "Course of Study for Country Schools" and attended Spring Green high school one term. In the following spring he attended teachers' examination and secured third grade certificate and the following winter taught his first term of school. He continued to teach in winter and work on farm in summer until spring of 1882, when he, with two other brothers, went west and settled in Spink county, S. D., and took a claim and remained there two years, when, owing to complete failure of crops, he returned to his home in Wisconsin and again taught school in winter and worked at other work in summer. In 1886 he again came west and accepted a position with his brother in the office of county auditor at Canton, S. D., which he held two years, when he resigned to accept the position of deputy treasurer, which he held till spring of 1893, when he resigned the position and came to Ponca and opened a real estate and abstract office. August 1, 1892, he was married to Miss Eva A. Prince at Canton, S. D. Mr. Cooper was elected in the fall of 1895 to the office of clerk of the district court for Dixon county, commencing his duties in January, 1896.

W. P. Logan, a prominent young business man, now of New Castle, was born at Troy, Kansas, Nov. 29, 1868, and came to Nebraska at an early age with his parents and to Ponca a few years ago. Was employed in the Farmers and Merchants bank and First National of Ponca from 1885 to 1893, and was city treasurer in 1892. In March, '93, was elected cashier of the Farmers State bank at New Castle, of which he was one of the organizers and stockholders, and to which place he removed. Mr. Logan was largely instrumental in the building of the new \$4,000 school house there recently, while director of the district. He is now serving his second term as village treasurer of that place. Mr. Logan is a young man of fine attainments which are shown in his efforts for the up-building of New Castle. He was married, December 23, 1890, to Gail Conner, of Ponca, and now has two children.

S. P. Mikesell was born in Indiana county, Penn., June 14, 1839. Received a preparatory education for college, at Eldersridge Academy, and entered the Sophomore class, Pennsylvania College, in 1861. Left the junior class in 1863 and joined the 26th Regiment of Pennsylvania volunteers, commanded by Col. Jennings.

After the battle of Gettysburg he was appointed clerk in the ordinance office, war department, Washington. Resigned this position in the fall of 1865, and came to Nebraska in March, 1866. Was a resident of Dakota City and Sioux City three years. In June, 1869, located in Ponca and entered the mercantile business with John Stough under the firm name of Stough & Mikesell. On January 1, 1885, the firm was dissolved, and in September of the same year, Mr. Mikesell opened the large store (38 x 100 feet) which he had previously built and which he has occupied from that time to the present. Mr. Mikesell is one of the most successful and reliable merchants in the county, and in other pursuits as well as merchandise, has an immense business. In education and executive ability he probably has no superiors in the county. At New Castle, Mr. M. has another extensive mercantile establishment of which J. M. Hoskinson is manager. Mr. Mikesell has a wife and three grown up sons. A view of his large residence, as well as his portrait, are seen on the following pages.

P. McCabe has been an excellent and popular sheriff four years, his term ending January 1, 1896. He came to this country at an early day, and has a large and valuable farm on which as in other business he has been successful.

J. D. Harris, who has been the clerk of the district court for several years, resides a stone's throw outside the city limits, where he and his family have a pleasant home. Mr. Harris has also been deputy county clerk several terms, and in official business of that kind, it is not likely he can be excelled.

Dr. Stevenson, a reputable dentist, recently located in Ponca, taking the place of Dr. Wasson, who removed to Sioux City.

Dr. J. M. O'Connell has been a successful physician at this place for the past fifteen years, and has the confidence of the people and a large practice.

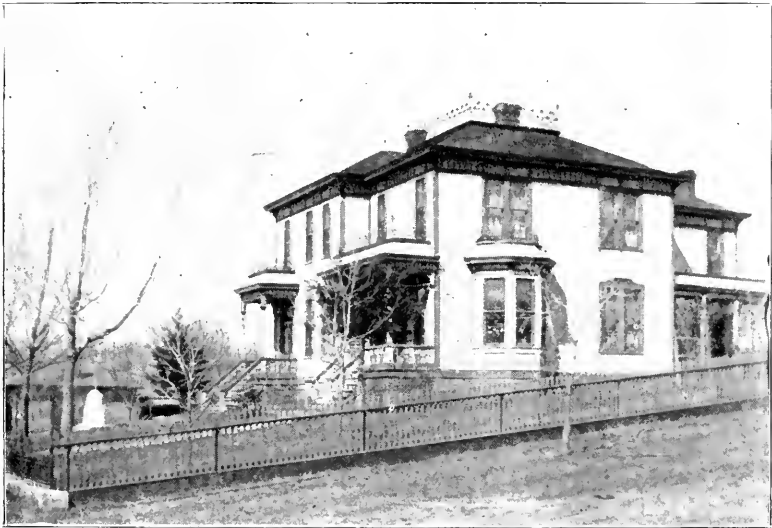






S. P. MIKESELL.

(See page 184.)



S. P. MIKESELL'S RESIDENCE, PONCA.



Bion H. Culver was born in Granby township, Oswego county, N. Y., in 1857. In 1860, his parents removed to a farm near Dixon, Ill., where his father died in 1865. In 1870, he and his mother came to Nebraska and lived on a homestead near Pleasant Dale, in Seward county, till the fall of 1875. While living here he attended school in district No. 17 about eight months, the only public school he ever attended. In the spring of 1875, passed examination before the county superintendent of Lancaster county and received his first teacher's certificate. In September, 1875, he entered the State University as a student. He worked his way through an eight-year course at the University by occasionally teaching, and graduated with the class of 1883, receiving the degree of B. S. After graduating he was elected principal of the public schools at Rulo. He served a short time, and was then called back to his alma mater, the State University, to take the responsible position of instructor in modern languages. He held this position for three years after which he went to Denver to take a position as teacher but failing health compelled him to abandon school entirely for some time. In 1888, he went to Europe to complete his studies in the languages. While there he attended a post-graduate course of lectures at the Bavarian Royal University at Munich, Germany. Since returning to America has been constantly engaged in school work and is now serving his fifth year as principal of the Ponca public schools. Prof. Culver was married Aug. 9, 1893, to Miss Cynthia J. Culp of Constantine, Mich., who for several years has been the efficient assistant principal of the Ponca high school.

Dr. J. W. Porter was born in Chautauqua county, New York, and came to Ponca in 1858. He was elected county judge in October, '71, and held that office until January 1, 1876. Since then he has had a very successful practice as a physician. He has a wife and four children.

T. J. Welty came to Ponca in 1869. Was a farmer at first, then a merchant, and afterwards gave excellent satisfaction as county clerk for five years.

J. Hewett came to Dixon county at an early day. First settled in Silver Creek and afterwards removed to Ponca, where he now resides. Has had various city offices and is much respected by the citizens.

T. J. Sheibley, was born in Duncannon, Perry county, Pa., July 12, 1845. Was raised on a farm and lived there till April 19, 1861, when he enlisted at Duncannon in Company B of the First Pennsylvania Rifles, (Bucktails,) and was discharged, November 19, 1864, at Harrisburg, Pa. During all the time he was in the army, he was in active service and in many engagements. He participated in the battles of Mechanicsville, Va., June 26, 1862; Gaines Mill, Va., June 27; Charles City Cross Roads, Va., June 30; the second battle of Bull Run, Va., August 29 and 30; South Mountain, Md., September 14; Antietam, Md., September 16 and 17; Fredericksburg, Va., December 13; all the above being in 1862. In 1863 he was in the battle of Gettysburg, Pa., July 2 and 3, where he was slightly wounded. Was in the Mine Run campaign in December, 1863, and in the battle of Spottsylvania Court House May 8 and 9, 1864, where he lost a leg. That ended his military career. He was discharged in the November following. The "Bucktails," celebrated as among the bravest troops on the northern side, were skirmishing and scouting nearly all the time and at the end of the war over three-fourths of them had been killed or wounded. Mr. Sheibley on his discharge, returned to Duncannon, where, from June, 1865, he was postmaster until May 15, 1869. He was elected register and recorder of Perry county in October, '69, and held the office three years. In June '73, removed to Dixon county and settled on the southeast quarter, section 8, township 28, range 6, (Otter Creek township.) He now has 320 acres there. In October, 1885, on account of ill health of wife, removed to Florida and returned to Ponca in June, 1887. Was elected county clerk of Dixon county, November 5, 1889, and was re-elected in '91 and '93, during the six years, holding the office with ability and to the entire satisfaction of all, being, indeed, one of the most thorough officers the county has ever had. He was married July 6, 1872, to Sarah Wertz of Landesburg, Pa. They have one daughter, Miss Anna Sheibley, who has been deputy county clerk for four years, and who, in knowledge of the office and in business accomplishments, has few superiors.

Mark Brown, another worthy citizen, honorably served in the war four years, and was sheriff of the county two terms.





T. J. SHEIBLEY.

(See page 190.)





MISS HATTIE POMEROY, Deputy County Treasurer.

(See page 172.)



MISS ANNA SHEIBLEY, Deputy County Clerk.

(See page 190.)



There are a great many more citizens of Ponca who are deserving of special notices, but the extraordinary length of this chapter requires that the list be abridged.

Of those residents of Ponca not thus far mentioned but deserving of it and only lack of room preventing, are J. W. Armstrong, Wm. Austin, J. H. Cole, F. Conrad, E. B. Campbell, L. J. Coyle, (the agent at the railroad depot,) Thomas Crew, Daniel and Michael Donlin who are further mentioned in the part relating to Ponca township, Wm. Dullaghan the present efficient city marshal, A. J. Deal, Nate Heyden, O. L. Longmire, Fay and Selim Mattison, C. H. Marble, T. S. Myers, M. M. Myers, Albert Meyer, John McClary, P. J. Morris, A. J. Phillips, J. N. Peel, James Rush, Mr. Rogers, W. E. Pogue, Henry Sheffel, Jacob Sailor, Lee and Cy. Sincenbaugh, J. Thompkins, J. P. Travis, etc., etc.

Combined, the citizens of Ponca form a community which in intelligence, enterprise and morals is not surpassed by any town in the state.

Ponca has five churches, viz: The Lutheran, which has had the following pastors, Dr. W. Kuhus of Omaha came in 1865, followed in '67 by Prof. Samuel Aughey a short time and after him Rev. J. F. Kuhlman from '73 to '78, followed by Revs. G. H. Schaur, A. B. Schrader, Samuel Smith and W. C. McCool. An elegant church, one of the finest in this part of the state, was erected in 1892.

The Presbyterian church, organized in 1871, has had the the following pastors in the order here given: Revs. W. H. Clark, Chapman, R. L. Wheeler, (12 years,) Smith, Graves and Young. The society has a fine church well fitted up and furnished.

The Methodist church, has had the following pastors: Revs. J. B. Leedom; W. J. Barger, '76; F. H. Calder; Joel A. Smith, '79, '80; J. Fowler, '80, '82; J. B. Priest, '82, '85; C. F. Haywood, '85; J. H. Keeley; J. L. St. Clair, '88; J. H. Frazer; W. P. Kingsbury; J. H. Johnson; W. H. Linn, 93; J. M. Bothwell, 94; and F. G. Perry, '95. The Methodist society have a large and well arranged church, built in 1885 to take the place of the one blown down.

The Baptist church was organized in 1880, and has since had the following pastors: Revs. J. B. Ward, J. R. Wolf, F.

G. Boughton and D. W. Bouck. The church building is like the others, tastily built and comfortably arranged.

A large and commodious Catholic church was built in 1890, and its pastors have been, Fathers Schmit, Hanley and Geary. This and the other churches named have large congregations, and are prominent in good works and in the promotion of morals.

As has been previously mentioned, Ponca's large school building was built and took the place of the old one, in 1878. It has since been doubled in size, and a smaller school building erected on another street. For several years past, from six to eight teachers have been employed nine months in the year. The school is graded and the teachers are well skilled, and with the large number of scholars, improvement is rapid and satisfactory.

The lodges and benevolent societies in Ponca are the following: A. F. & A. M., I. O. of O. F., Knights of Pythias, Woodmen, Workmen, Daughters of Rebekah, Knights of the Maccabees, Women's Relief Corps, G. A. R., W. R. C. and W. C. T. U.

All the above have large memberships. The Masons, Odd Fellows and G. A. R. have large halls appropriately fitted up and furnished.

The city council for this year are G. L. Wood, mayor; W. W. Cooper, clerk; and M. M. Sencenbaugh, A. J. Phillips, M. I. Mellon, E. E. Halstead, E. J. Berry and Julius Drager, councilmen.

Ponca has a fine system of waterworks at present under the superintendency of O. P. Sullenberger.

John Austin and sons at Ponca landing have a ferry so that those who so desire, can without much expense escape into South Dakota.



W. W. COOPER.

(See page 155.)



PROF. P. H. GLYER.

(See page 156.)



## CHAPTER XVI.

## IONIA AND PONCA TOWNSHIPS — THEIR CITIZENS, ETC., ETC.

## IONIA TOWNSHIP.

The region comprising the township of Ionia is bounded on the north and east by the Missouri river, south by the townships of New Castle and Ponca, and west by Hooker. Except the bottom land along the river, the country is rough and hilly, but all, whether hill or valley, has excellent soil, good water, and, especially on the bottoms, large tracts of valuable timber. The township has now about 550 inhabitants. It has had no village since the town site of Ionia was swept away by the river. The only reminders of that unfortunate place now remaining, are the Ionia ferryboat which, as near as may be, still traverses its ancient path across the river, and the Ionia post office a mile or two east of where old Ionia stood. To this part of the county the notice of settlers was attracted at an early day, and at one time, as we have seen in the preceding pages, Ionia was a place of much importance and business. Among those who have been in the past or are at present prominent in Ionia, are the following:

L. T. Hill was born in West Concord, Vt., in 1823. Was married to Sarah J. Smith in Boston, Mass., in 1852, and in 1857 they removed from Boston to Davenport, Iowa, where he was engaged in business until the spring of 1859 when he came to Ionia, that town site having been purchased for him the year before by the Messrs. Pierce. To the building up of Ionia, Mr. Hill, with energy and success devoted several years, and saw it advance from a naked town site to a prosperous place of business, with a population of several hundred. A more extended account of its growth has been given elsewhere. During the Indian scare of 1863, Mr. Hill was away from home and his wife refused to leave the place.

herself and family being the only ones in that part of the county that were not frightened away. In 1861, with the assistance of John Taffe, then delegate in congress from Nebraska, Mr. Hill succeeded in establishing a post office at Ionia, and at the same time a post office at Vermillion, Dakota the latter being the first post office established in that territory. In 1881, Mr. Hill, with his family removed to Canton, Dakota, where he built a large grist mill, and where he resided until 1892. In that year he went to California where some of his children had preceded him and where he now resides. During all the years that he lived in Ionia, his doors were always open to any and all who chanced to come that way, and his hospitality knew no bounds. Mr. Hill was a prominent citizen of Dixon county during his residence here. He was probate judge for several years.

Henry M. Pierce and his father, J. J. Pierce, were fitted out by L. T. Hill in Davenport in 1858 and employed by him to come west and locate a town site somewhere in the wilds of Nebraska, and the same year they secured the town site of Ionia which had been previously located, Mr. Hill joining them the following year. J. J. Pierce died in North Bend in this county about twenty years ago. Henry M. Pierce is now living in Sioux City, Iowa.

Nelson Feauto and Isaac Feauto, brothers, settled upon the farm now owned by J. F. Gibbs, northwest of Ionia in 1861. Isaac Feauto died upon the place he located in 1872. The wife of Nelson Feauto died and was buried upon their farm in 1870, and he died at St. Helena, Cedar county in 1890. Both brothers left large families. Nelson Feauto, Jr., of Emerson, is the only descendant of the two families living in the county.

Charles H. Smith, came with L. T. Hill to Ionia in 1859, was married in 1862 to Clarissa Pierce, and now resides on his farm of over 200 acres near the original town site of Ionia. He has for several years past been postmaster at the Ionia post office. He has the finest farm and the finest buildings in all that part of the county and has raised a family of eight children, seven of whom are living, and three are married and settled near him.

Almond Smith and wife, the father and mother of Mrs. L. T. Hill and C. H. Smith, came to Ionia in 1860 where they



lived with their son, C. H. Smith, and where Grandma Smith died in 1878 and Grandpa Smith in 1880 at the ages of 78 and 85 years respectively. Both were buried in the Ionia cemetery. They enjoyed the distinction of being the oldest couple in the county for several years.

Roswell Hotchkiss settled above Ionia upon the place now owned by T. J. Ryan, in 1856. Removed to Colorado in 1868 where he still remains.

Joseph Stefani settled in Ionia township in 1859 upon the place now owned by J. F. Gibbs and was married to Betsey Sutherland in 1869. He conducted a general store in Ionia in 1872 and 1873 and removed to Burbank, Dakota, in '73, near which place he now resides.

In 1870 William B., Allen H. and John W. Ellyson, brothers, settled in Ionia, and together built the first steam ferry in operation in the county. They are now all prosperous farmers in Ionia township. A. H. Ellyson was county commissioner and supervisor several terms.

Edward Newton and family settled in Ionia in 1869. He with Bosley and Landon leased and run the Ionia steam saw and grist mills of L. T. Hill for five years. Bosley retiring, O. P. Sullenberger took his place in the firm the second year. Mr. Newton is now a successful farmer, living upon one of his farms in Ponca township.

Dexter Rice settled with his family upon the place now owned by A. H. Ellyson in Ionia township in 1866, removing from there in 1876 to a valuable farm in Hooker township where he now lives.

Benjamin, James P. and Sylvester Cook, brothers, settled near Ionia in 1864. Benjamin removed, went to Iowa in '86 and remained there. James P. removed to Ponca in 1880 and has since lived there, and Sylvester still resides, a well to do farmer, upon his farm in Ionia township.

T. J. Ryan, the supervisor of Ionia at this time (1895), came to that township in 1881 from Dakota and devoted himself to farming and stock raising with great success. He now owns 1,120 acres, a large share of it being rich Missouri river bottom land, 450 acres of which are under cultivation, 300 acres of timber and the balance meadow and pasture. His farm has two good houses, several large farm barns, one of them being 85x100 feet, two flowing wells, respectively

407 and 265 feet deep, the first wells of the kind in the county, a steam saw mill, and in connection a steam syrup factory, all with the best machinery and latest improvements, in which he made 5,000 gallons of sorghum syrup in '94 and the same in '95. He is one of the most progressive and independent of Dixon county farmers and cannot be worth less than \$35,000. His family consists of a wife, one son and six daughters. See his portrait elsewhere.

Amasa Pettit, supervisor in '92 and '93, came from Dakota about 1885. He has 200 acres of bottom land and is a good farmer in good circumstances. He has a large family.

John F. Gibbs is one of Dixon county's best citizens, resides in Ionia, where he and his sons own 600 acres of excellent valley land. Mr. Gibbs was a member of the board of supervisors in 1887-8.

Among the other prosperous farmers of Ionia at this time, may be mentioned Eli Heald and B. Pearson.

Rev. W. S. Bates, a much esteemed former resident of Ionia, died at Nevada, Iowa, October 28, 1879. He was superintendent of schools for Dixon County during '72-'73-'74 and '75.

As a matter of course there are many more farmers in the township, thickly settled as it is, than those we have mentioned above. Among them are Elias Warner, quite an old settler and who, in addition to farming, has had a mill since 1869; M. L. Smathers, Andrew Spellacy, etc., etc. The names of others have not been furnished us.

Ionia township has good school houses and the schools are generally well attended and have efficient teachers. Ionia used to be celebrated for its valuable timber, its volcano, its town and its hospitable citizens. Of the timber there is yet much remaining, although the best has been cut off and made into lumber. The volcano and the townsite are now both buried in mud at the bottom of the Missouri river and the hospitality and good society of an excellent class of citizens alone remain.

The portraits of Mr. and Mrs. L. T. Hill, will by their many former friends and neighbors in Ionia, be seen with pleasure, and they will be found on the next pages. They will bring back the remembrance of old times and the hardships and pleasures of frontier life.





L. T. HILL.



MRS. L. T. HILL



## PONCA TOWNSHIP.

The good citizens of Ponca township have been and are now numerous, and the names of a few of them will here be found.

Charles F. Putnam, one of the most respected of the pioneers, was born in Cavendish, Vt., in 1835. Went to Massachusetts in '46, came to Ponca in '56, and made his home there or in Ponca township ever since. Roughed it in early times with the rest of the settlers. Lived in Ponca one year, then took as a homestead a place now owned by J. G. Crowell, a mile west of Jeff. Wilbur's farm. The farm he now owns and has lived on for the past twelve years contains 180 acres, and is well located and cultivated. Mr. Putnam was the first sheriff of the county, and has since usefully filled several offices. He is in every respect a worthy citizen and highly esteemed throughout the county. His excellent memory of past events has greatly assisted in the preparation of this history. Mr. Putnam is married and has two sons and one daughter.

A Davis, another pioneer, came to this county January 3, 1861, and first located at Ponca. In the fall of '65 he was elected county treasurer, and held that office year after year by the almost unanimous consent of the citizens, until January, 1876—ten years. Much of the time, Mr. Davis, like Bisbee, carried his office in his hat, yet with such extreme carefulness, that every cent received was promptly accounted for. A few years ago he removed to Ponca township, where, on an excellent farm and with a clear conscience, he passes his honorable days with his family in peace and comfort.

M. B. Dewitt came here in 1866, took a homestead and now lives on what was the old Beardshear homestead. He and his children have 510 acres well cultivated and good buildings. Has a wife and 4 sons and 3 daughters. He was sheriff five terms, and supervisor six years. His portrait appears with those of the supervisors of 1895. In the preceding pages some of his experiences as sheriff appear in connection with the Mat Miller trial and the Indians who murdered Munson.

Rev. H. Beardshear, the father-in-law of Mr. Dewitt, came in 1865, and located where he now lives.

Samuel Biggerstaff, 1854, lived and died in Ponca township. Owned 160 acres. Thomas Stobaugh and Joseph Morehouse came with Biggerstaff. Morehouse is dead and Stobaugh in Missouri.

S. H. Coats, 1867, came from Iowa, was county surveyor several years and had a farm near Sheriff Dewitt's. He was prominent in county affairs and a useful citizen. He went to the Black Hills about 1875.

Mordecca Smith came in 1870 and has a good farm where he resides.

John Roden is one of the wealthiest men in the county. He has several hundred acres where he lives, and is largely engaged in farming and stock raising. He was one of the early settlers of the county, coming here in 1856.

Jefferson Wilbur has been a resident for over thirty-five years. He has a large farm about a mile west of Ponca and owns property in town.

David Carnell came with Mr. Dewitt, his brother-in-law, and settled near him. He died many years ago, leaving a large family. His widow married Charles Barber.

George Mattison was an early settler and is a prominent farmer and business man. For several years he was in the milling business and is now largely engaged in farming, buying and shipping cattle, etc. He has a large farm, fine house and improvements where he and his family reside, and has the respect and esteem of the county at large. He was elected to the legislature a year ago and served his constituents with ability and success.

B. H. Beller and his brothers, E. Beller and Phil Beller, came here at an early day. They first located in the township and B. H. now resides there. The others have removed to Ponca city. B. H. Beller was sheriff of the county in 1874 and 1875. All are respected and worthy citizens.

"Old Man" Shook, as he was called, came here in 1852 from Sioux City and lived in the timber several years. He died about twenty-six years ago.

John Enders came in the fall of '65 and his brother, Jesse Enders, about '66. Both are farmers and both have valuable farms and improvements. They have families and are in comfortable circumstances.

Julius Shürner came with Nick Wallenstein from Germany



in 1873, and owns a valuable farm of 400 acres. Has a large family.

Benjamin Sencenbaugh, the father of Lee Sencenbaugh and Cy Sencenbaugh of Ponca city, located about 1866 in Ponca township on a homestead adjoining and south of the Donlin place, (a mile east of town). Late in the fall of '69, while digging a well, and when at a depth of forty feet the hoisting box filled with dirt came loose and fell that distance upon him, injuring him so severely that he died that night. He was a good and industrious man and much liked in the community.

Daniel Donlin, from Bear Creek, Iowa, settled near where Martinsburg now is, in June, 1856. He lived there till February 13, 1866, and was then frozen to death in a blizzard while returning from a trip to Sioux City. (An account of this is given elsewhere.) He left a wife and ten children. In March, 1866, his wife and a part of her family removed to their farm of 160 acres, about one and one-half miles east of Ponca, and has lived there since. Two of the sons, D. F. Donlin and Mike Donlin, live and are in business in Ponca; Wm. and Thomas Donlin at Martinsburg, and James and John on the farm east of Ponca.

Wm. O'Connor came from Erie, Pa., in 1863. Bought the place where he now lives, in October of that year. Left and went to Iowa after buying the land and was there five years. Married in Iowa in 1865. Came back here in 1868 and bought Adam Smith's farm south of Ponca. Lived there ever since '68. Has six children, all living and all born here but one. Mr. O'Conner knew President Garfield in 1848, when both were drivers on the canal in Ohio. Mr. O'Conner is noted as having an excellent memory and education.

John McKinley and Judge Arnold, both of whom have been in a great measure identified with Ponca township, have brief sketches in the chapter relating to Ponca city.

Wm. Shea was a soldier in the regular army from 1835, for near twenty years. Was stationed at Fort Randall in 1861, and from there went south and came back in 1864. Soon after, he took a homestead of 160 acres in this township, adjoining the Arnold farm, and bought eighty acres more on which he lived. He died in 1882. He had no family. The farm is now owned by Wm. O'Conner.

D. P. Sherwood came here from the east with his family in 1876, and bought and located on the farm of Phil Beller, about a mile northwest of Ponca. The same year he commenced raising an orchard. Since then he has added to the first quarter section until he now has 720 acres, hill and valley, well watered and suitably divided into fields by several miles of fence. Since the first also, he has devoted his attention largely to orchards and fruit. He has now over 8,000 fruit trees, mainly apple, 5,000 of which are old enough to bear. His trees are divided into four orchards, in the first of which, about 1,000 trees are seventeen years old. In addition to apple trees, he has pear, plum and cherry trees and a large number of choice grape vines. He has demonstrated that fruit, and good fruit, can be raised here in abundance and with profit. Mr. Sherwood deserves the friendly remembrance of the citizens of the county for the persistence with which he has, in the face of difficulties, short crops and many discouragements, kept to his determination to have a great fruit farm. Within a few years, when all his great army of trees are bearing, the result will be thousands of bushels per year. It is to be hoped he will live to see and enjoy the day. Mr. Sherwood is married and has a large family of sons and daughters.

Charles Frederick Blecker came from Prussia in 1862. Stopped in Pennsylvania seven years and then came to this township. Wm. Blecker and August Blecker came with him. Wm. died after being here a year, and August moved to Iowa about sixteen years ago. Charles bought a farm of 160 acres and paid \$310 for it. He has now 480 acres well improved and in as fine a location as the county affords. Has three sons, two of whom Robert and Charles A., are married and have good farms near by, and one daughter, married to Fred Rogosh, who lives on West Creek.

Barney McShane, another prosperous proprietor of a large farm came here some fifteen years ago.

H. I. Brown has a large farm, highly improved and cultivated, a fine residence, and groves, fruit trees and grape vines in splendid condition, about two miles northwest of town. Mr. Brown came here a few years ago and has since been prominent in public affairs.





A. DAVIS.  
(See page 207.)



C. F. PUTNAM.  
(See page 207.)

M. Huddleston owned and ran the ferry across the Missouri at Sioux City in 1857 and conveyed across a large number of the people who at that time came to Dixon county. He afterwards went to Niobrara and in 1864 came here and bought of John Stough the farm he afterwards lived on up to about four years ago, when he sold it to the Ponca Driving & Fair Association for fair grounds, race course, etc. Mr. Huddleston was never married. A short time before he came here, his brother, Wm. Huddleston, became a resident of Ponca, and lived there much of the time since then. Both are men who have a multitude of friends and without an enemy in the world.

B. G. Rahn, a resident for a number of years past, has a well improved farm of 400 acres.

Perry Douthit came from Iowa in 1870. Has 400 acres. Is largely and profitably engaged in dairying.

F. S. Payne, a successful farmer, has resided here 6 or 8 years.

A. Reynolds, up to his death about two years ago, resided for several years on his farm, a short distance northwest of Ponca. He was county judge in '90, '91, '92 and '93, and performed the duties of the office acceptably. He had also been supervisor of Ponca township in 1886, and some years before was postmaster at Ponca. He left a wife and several children, who still reside on the pleasant farm owned by him.

E. W. Shaw came from New York in 1879. Started a harness shop in Ponca and then bought a farm two miles east. He has 333 acres, well improved, and is a successful farmer.

W. F. Robinson and family came here from Meigs county, Ohio, in April, 1890. Wm. Scott and J. D. Kautz (sons-in-law of Mr. Robinson,) and their families came with him. All live in Ponca township. Robinson has 160 acres, and Scott and Mr. Kautz 200 each. Mr. R. has a wife and nine sons and daughters, six of whom are married.

Antone Engle, came to Ponca township about 1872 and is a successful farmer. He was one of the county commissioners in 1883 and 1884, two years, at the end of which time he resigned.

O. Waterman came in 1883 from Ida county, Iowa, where he had been auditor and clerk for ten years. He first bought 100 acres here, and now owns 400, all fenced and improved. Has a wife and eight sons and daughters, all married except two.

An institution that in a county of so much abundance is next to useless, is the county poor farm. The farm is in Ponca township and is situated three miles west of Ponca on the Silvercreek road and contains 160 acres of good land. The house is 24x50 feet, and two stories high, containing 18 rooms. The grounds around the house are artistically arranged and attractively filled with shade trees, vines, etc. The building was completed in the summer of 1894 and on the 1st of November of that year was opened. R. P. Williams, an energetic farmer of Otter Creek, was appointed superintendent and remained a year giving good satisfaction by his excellent management. During the time there were from two to three inmates.

The names of other of the residents of Ponca township are doubtless also deserving of mention. These brief notices in all townships are furnished us by those who are acquainted with the residents, but of course they have been liable to forget many of them.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## SILVER CREEK, DAILY, HOOKER, CLARK AND NEW CASTLE TOWNSHIPS AND NEW CASTLE VILLAGE.

## SILVER CREEK TOWNSHIP

Is bounded on the north by New Castle, east by Ponca, south by Galena and west by Daily, and is six miles square, with not an acre of poor land in it. The township is settled by a class of citizens whose farms, dwellings and improvements are evidences of prosperity and good taste. There are no villages in the township. There is one postoffice, (Hazel), six schoolhouses and two churches, the West Union (Presbyterian) and the (M. E.) Central.

In 1874 the Silver Ridge seminary was opened by Rev. Walter H. Clark, and was conducted several years and finally discontinued.

In this township are a large number of orchards, prominent among which are those on the farms of Mr. Murfin, Mr. Blecker (the farm bought by him of F. S. Payne) Miller, Merritt, Mille, Mendenhall, Russell, Weidenfeldt, Schram and Armstrong. With proper attention fruit does well here, as it does in every part of the county.

C. W. Schram is a native of New York state, from whence he came to Belle Plaine, Iowa, and from there in 1871 to Omaha, and the following year to Dixon county, locating in Silver Creek township. He now has a farm of 320 acres, all under excellent cultivation, and the best buildings in the township. When he came here he hadn't money enough to buy a pair of boots. He is now worth at least \$10,000. He has held township offices for the past twenty years, and is now a member of the board of supervisors. He is married and has nine children, all living. See the page of portraits of supervisors of 1895.

Dan Curry came to Dixon county from Pennsylvania in

1868. Is a farmer, and he and his sons own nearly two sections in the township.

Frank and Gottlieb Miille came to this country from Germany and located in Silver Creek in 1868. Frank now owns 1,000 acres of well improved land. Has eight sons and daughters, four of whom are married. He pays the most taxes of any man in Silver Creek. Gottlieb owns about a section of land, well improved. Has eleven children, two of them married.

P. Dempsey, the first settler of Silver Creek township, was born in County Kildare, Ireland, 75 years ago. He came to New York in 1848, and afterwards removed to Pennsylvania, and from there to Dixon county, arriving May 7th, 1857. Has lived since 1860 in Silver Creek, where he has 800 acres of fine, improved land. Is worth about \$30,000. Has had ten children, all of whom, except two, are living. Mr. Dempsey has been prominent in public affairs, and was supervisor for Silver Creek several years.

Mark Runyan located in Silver Creek in 1870. He is a farmer, has half a section of land, good buildings and improvements and is out of debt. His wife died about a year ago. Never had county or town office and would never accept any.

Herman and Henry Wendte, brothers, came in 1875 from Germany and brought considerable money with them. Herman has three-fourths of a section, and Henry half a section of excellent land. Both married and have large families.

John Mannion came in 1870 from Ireland. He is the largest cattle feeder in Silver Creek. Has over a section of land, well improved, good buildings, etc. Has a wife and six children.

J. L. Murfin came from Illinois in 1882, and has 200 acres in fine condition. One of the best farmers in Silver Creek. Has a wife and eight children, two of them married. Worth about \$8,000 and out of debt.

David Armstrong located in Silver Creek in 1885. Has three quarters of a section of land. Is well fixed and is a good farmer. Has the only brick house in the township. Has ten children living, eight sons and two daughters.

C. G. Wilson lives on the "Rus. Wilbur farm," which he







O. M. CHILDS.

(See page 219.)

bought in 1880. Was the first supervisor of Silver Creek under township organization.

Thomas McClary came here in 1870 and bought and now occupies a farm of 200 acres. Has eight sons and daughters, all grown up, and all married but one.

E. L. Heidy came in 1874 from Illinois. His farm has 200 acres, with good improvements. He is out of debt and is worth \$5,000. Has a small family.

Fred Stark arrived from Germany in 1869, took a homestead and added to it until he now has a farm of 480 acres. Good buildings, orchard, grove, etc. Has a wife and thirteen children.

William Stark came from Germany and took a homestead in 1875. Has a wife and eight children. Is comfortably fixed and has located his three sons on farms near him.

Joe Mendenhall came from Indiana in 1875, located on 160 acres of land and occupies it at the present time. A thrifty and substantial farmer. He has a wife, six girls and a boy.

Ernst Steffin, from Germany. First located in Daily, then removed to Silver Creek in 1870 and has lived there since. Has a farm of 240 acres.

R. H. Hammant settled in Silver Creek twenty-five or thirty years ago and was a successful farmer. He sold his place about twelve years ago to Geo. Lamprecht, who has since resided there.

Dayton Ward was superintendent of schools a few years ago. He has a farm of 160 acres.

E. H. Jones, for several years sheriff of the county, settled in Silver Creek in 1871 with his parents and brothers and engaged in farming. He was elected sheriff and served with great success in that office for three terms commencing January 1st, 1878. He was highly esteemed as a citizen and justly popular as an officer. He died at Ponca in 1890. His family remain in Silver Creek.

Squire Hewett, now living in Ponca city, formerly lived on a large farm which he had in Silver Creek.

A. Drager was a successful Silver Creek farmer, removing to Ponca several years ago.

O. M. Childs, born in 1834 in Pennsylvania, was married at Erie Dec. 4, '65, to Mrs. Sarah Peabody of Crawford county, that state. Enlisted Aug. 8, '62, for 9 months in Co.

A. 131st Reg't., Pa. Vol., and was wounded Dec. '62, in the Fredericksburg fight. Was in the government construction corps one year. Re-enlisted in 1864 in Co. 1, 8th Reg't., Pa. Cav., for one year. Was wounded in front of Petersburg and discharged on account of it, July 13, '65. Was in nine hard fought battles. Moved to Nebraska in 1870, and located in Silver Creek, where he and family now reside. Has a farm of 160 acres, well improved and fenced, with a good house, grove, etc. He and his wife have two daughters, who reside with them, and one son, J. A. Childs, married, and living a mile west on a 120-acre farm of his own. Mr. Childs has also two daughters in Pennsylvania.

There are many other farmers in Silver Creek of whom no special mention is made for the want of information concerning them.

The following are the names of some:

George Foulks, K. N. Crandall, L. Coleman, G. Dudley, Roy Dudley, H. S. Cummings, Charles Crofoot, John Wilbur, H. Lowe, J. Kendall, R. Andrews, Chub Hines, C. E. Merritt, Fred Weidenfeldt, Frank Engle, Stephen Gasser, W. S. Russell, etc.

#### DAILY TOWNSHIP

Has thirty-six square miles of fine farming land. It has Hooker township on the north, Silver Creek on the east, Clark on the south and the county line on the west. Daily has no villages; one postoffice, Daily Branch, six school-houses, and one church, the Tara Hill church (Catholic), built about twelve years ago.

In this township there were very few settlers until 1870, in which year a large number came, mostly from Galena, Illinois. As is the general rule in Dixon county, the people who have homes in Daily are enterprising and prosperous.

M. Conway came to Daily township in the spring of 1873, from Clayton county, Iowa, with a small amount of money, and took a homestead of 160 acres. He now has half a section, with good buildings and improvements. By his energy and good management in farming and other business he is now amply able and has no debts or liabilities. Has a wife and nine children, all living at home. Has had town offices frequently and was elected supervisor in 1891, and held that

office until the re-organization of the board in October, 1895. His portrait with those of the other members of the board is seen on another page.

J. H. Addison came in 1870 and took a homestead, which he still occupies. He now has one-half a section, well improved, and is in good pecuniary circumstances. He was county superintendent of schools one term, and a member of the board of supervisors four years.

In 1870, C. W. Sherman came from New York, poor, took a homestead, was energetic, and has now a valuable farm of 240 acres, and is in excellent financial condition. He is one of Dixon county's very best men. His wife and one son comprise his family. He was the first supervisor of Daily, after township organization was adopted, and was county commissioner several years previously.

Ben. McGuirk came in 1871 from Galena, Ill., hard up, and took a homestead, and now has one section all in first-class shape.

Thomas I. Thomas came in 1870 or 1871 from Galena, Ill. Has at least a section of land, and is considered the richest man in town and worth \$25,000 or more. Has a large family, all living at home.

Pat Bennett located in Daily in 1870. His farm of 480 acres has fine improvements and the best house in town, and his circumstances are in every way prosperous. He has a wife and seven children. A year ago, Mr. Bennett moved to New Castle and engaged in the business of buying grain.

Edward McGrath, another good farmer and stock raiser of Daily, came from Galena, Ill., in 1870. Has a wife and seven sons and daughters, all grown up and living near him.

Peter McClusky about 1870 took a homestead, and now has 280 acres, together with cattle, horses, etc., and is out of debt.

John O'Grady about 1870 came from Galena, Ill., and took a homestead of 160 acres. He has now 240 acres, with buildings and improvements O. K. Has a large family of sons and daughters, mostly grown up.

Sol Cummings came about three years ago from New Castle and bought a quarter section. Is a successful farmer. Has a wife and several children.

Pat McGuirk, son of Ben McGuirk, has two good farms in

Daily and another in Clark, and is successful in business and popular with a host of friends.

John McGrath, son of Edward McGrath, is another good farmer in Daily.

Ed. Wilkinson located in Daily about 16 years ago. He has a well improved 160-acre farm and is well off.

W. W. Atkinson came at an early day and bought 320 acres. Died about two years ago. His wife was post-mistress at Daily postoffice for eighteen years. No children. Mr. Atkinson was a county commissioner for several terms and an excellent, popular and useful citizen.

Wm. Mallory came in 1873, and took a homestead where he still lives. He and his family are in comfortable circumstances.

Mike Donahue took a homestead in 1870, and now has a fine farm of 520 acres well improved. Has a wife and eight children living.

Pat Morris and John McManus both came about the same time, 1870, took homesteads and lived there till a year ago when they removed to Ponca. Both are comfortably off.

James Hillen, 1870, farmer, 280 acres. Good improvements. Large family.

Michael Dougherty, from Galena, Ill., in 1870. Owns 320 acres and is out of debt.

Wm. Cady located in Daily about twelve years ago. Has 160 acres nicely cultivated and improved.

John H. Powers came from Galena, Ill., in 1870, and has about 500 acres. He was poor when he came, but energy and industry have brought success and good fortune.

Josiah Hoover took a homestead in 1870, and was there until his death in 1891. His family yet live there.

Brian Manley took a homestead in 1870 and yet lives on it. Has a large family, all at home.

Herman Baker, an old settler, has a good farm and a blacksmith shop, and is well off.

Peter Askin came here about fourteen years ago and bought a good farm of 160 acres, well improved, where he and his family now live.

H. H. Grosvenor is an old settler and successful farmer.

James Ward, a worthy citizen of Daily, died several

years ago. He had a good farm on which his wife now resides.

In addition to the above there are numerous other citizens of Daily concerning whom we are unable to obtain information as to when they came, their farms, etc.

Among them are: David Monfort, Dan McDonald, Charles Martin, Phil Dougherty Jr., Mike Dougherty, Balt Addison, Taylor, etc., most of whom are successful stock growers or farmers.

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#### HOOKER TOWNSHIP

Is situated in the northwest corner of the county. It adjoins Ionia and New Castle on the east, Daily on the south, Cedar county on the west, and the Missouri river bounds it on the north. It contains about fifty square miles. Hooker has now no village, and though the ancient villages of Concord-Dixon-North-Bend were once prominent on the map of the town, they have not been in existence for nearly thirty-five years. The face of the country in Hooker is somewhat rough, but the soil is excellent and along the river timber is abundant. Stock raising was for many years a leading enterprise, but as the population increased, the stock business has given place to general farming.

A few of those who have been prominent as citizens or early settlers of Hooker are the following:

A. N. Gran and S. N. Gran and their father Nels H. Gran came from Norway. A. N. Gran in '68, and S. N. Gran and their father in '70, and located on homesteads in Hooker in 1871. A. N. Gran and his brother now occupy the same claims first taken by them; their father lived on his until his death in 1889. Both the brothers are successful and enterprising men and have large farms which are well improved and profitably worked. A. N. has 250 and S. N. 240 acres. The former has a wife and four children living and the latter has a wife but no children. Both are prominent in township affairs, and A. N. Gran has been Hooker's member of the board of supervisors several years, his term ending in October, 1895, on the reorganization under the new law. His portrait will be seen with the rest of the board on another page.

John Maskell, an excellent citizen and farmer, settled in Hooker in 1856, and resided there until he removed to Vermillion, S. D., in 1894. During his long residence in that township he has been successful in business and has seen the hardships of frontier life give place to the comforts and independence of the present. His farm is now occupied by his son Andrew Maskell.

H. Weidenfeldt, from Wisconsin in 1870. Homesteaded 160 acres and still occupies it. In addition to cultivating and improving his farm, he has been largely engaged in the stock business. His family consists of himself, wife and twelve sons and daughters.

Mr. McCleary settled at an early day where Lime Grove postoffice now is. Moved away about twelve years ago.

H. Tarsony took a homestead in Hooker over twenty-five years ago. Now has about a section of land and fine improvements. Has been mainly engaged in stock raising.

O. K. Anderson, an early settler was successfully engaged in farming and stock raising until five years ago, since which time he had been in the western part of the state. His family still occupy the farm in Hooker. Has four sons and two daughters.

Mons Nelson, farmer and stock raiser since he located there in the fall of 1856 up to 1880, when the Missouri river cut across North Bend and swept out his farm. In 1880 he removed to South Dakota, and now lives in Gayville, in that state.

John Connery became a resident in 1868. Has now a section of land profitably farmed.

Dexter Rice. (See Ionia township).

Charles Brookey lives near the Missouri river, and is well fixed. He came there at an early day with his father, John Brookey, who was one of the county commissioners in 1865.

James G. Bailey and sons came to Hooker more than twenty-five years ago. He was a prominent and influential citizen up to his death four years ago. His sons, John, William, James and S. D. Bailey, are successful men in business and all reside in Hooker, except James, who lives on his farm in New Castle township.

Nels Johnson and his sons, Nels C. Johnson, Casper Johnson and Christ Nelson, are prosperous farmers and own val-



uable lands. They came to Daily township from Florence, Nebraska, in 1871, and afterwards removed to Hooker and bought the farm of McCleary at Lime Grove, where Nelson is postmaster and has a general store.

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#### NEW CASTLE TOWNSHIP.

The face of the country in New Castle township is much like that in the towns adjoining. Hills, fertile to their tops, fertile valleys and numerous unfailing streams, furnish a farming and stock growing region that can hardly be surpassed. The township is well settled up. Many of the citizens are wealthy, and nearly all are in independent circumstances.

The citizens never had a market near at hand until the extension of the C., St. P., M. & O. R. R. from Ponca to New Castle in 1893. When that extension was made, the hitherto dormant hamlet of New Castle developed rapidly, as related in a former chapter, into a brisk railroad town. Gustavus Smith, the leading spirit of that locality up to the time of his death, (July 27, 1880,) would have been glad to have lived to see such growth and advancement in the place he founded and named years before.

One of the first settlers in what is known as New Castle township, was William Pfister, who came from Harden county, Iowa, in 1858. He was a man possessed of good judgment and courage, and came with the expectation of finding a wild and unsettled country with Indians for neighbors. He was not greatly mistaken in his forecast of the future. The country was indeed wild when he came, white settlers were miles away, and for years his most frequent visitors were the roving Indians passing through that part of the country on their road between the Omaha and Santee agencies. He took a claim a few miles from where New Castle village is, and cultivated and improved it from year to year, built a farm house, barns and fences, started a grove and orchard, raised wheat and corn, cattle and hogs, and in due time was rewarded with plenty. For years after he located there, he could look in every direction and see no house or cultivated fields except his own. It was a solitary life, yet with his constant labor in improving and cultivating, his time was occupied, and life, though on the remote frontier, was pleasant. The

Indians who often passed, became acquainted and friendly, he could talk with them, and they showed no disposition to plunder or harm him. Sixteen years ago when the great prairie fire swept over that part of the county, he lost house, fences, stacks and nearly everything on his farm that would burn. In time he recovered from that visitation. He died in May, 1895, after an industrious life of 65 years. On the same place where he first located, he lived up to the time of his death. He left a valuable farm of 320 acres, good buildings and a large amount of stock. His wife survives him and now resides on the farm.

New Castle village, incorporated May 16, 1893, has a class of citizens whose energy and enterprise is seen in the continued improvement of the place.

Among the most prominent of the citizens is Thomas Hoy, to whose efforts, as described in chapter XII, the extension of the railroad to that place is mainly due. Mr. Hoy came when young to New Castle from Pittsburg, Pa., in the spring of 1872. He attended school, developed business habits, and finally taught school three terms. In 1878, he engaged in the mercantile business and has continued it all the time, substantially, since then. In 1880, was appointed postmaster which position he still fills. In 1882 his store and goods burned, there being a total loss, and soon after he rebuilt. He was a member of the board of supervisors in '92 and '93, and since the incorporation of New Castle has had a leading and progressive part in the official life of that place. His mercantile business is large, and after so many years in it, he has the acquaintance and confidence of a great share of the people in that part of the county. He was married in 1884 to Ellen McAndrews, and has five children, four girls and one boy.

W. P. Logan, another prominent young business man of New Castle, the cashier of the Farmers State Bank of that place, has already been noticed in the part devoted to Ponca city, where he formerly lived. His portrait is seen in this chapter.

E. E. Carder, the depot agent, came to New Castle in September, 1893. He is married and has two children. Is an efficient and popular railroad man.

John Coleman came from Sioux City in 1877, farmed three



W. P. LOGAN.

(See pages 226 and 183.)

Dr. W. R. Talbot located here in '93 and Dr. C. L. Roland in the spring of '95. Both are experienced physicians and surgeons.

H. W. Hopkins, stock buyer, came in '93.

Pat Bennett commenced buying grain here a year or more ago, and J. B. Flack for Peavey & Company last summer.

Suecker & Anderson, contractors and builders; Fred Calvert, market; Smith & Davis, blacksmiths; Frank Pletsch and Dougherty & Bennett, billiard halls; have been in New Castle from two to three years.

The school house at New Castle was recently built by Suecker & Anderson at a cost of about \$4,000. It is a fine building and a credit to the town.

New Castle has a large Catholic church, built many years ago, and of which Father O'Toole was pastor for about twelve years. He removed to Grand Island three years ago and Father Waldron has since been in charge.

The Congregational society at New Castle has also a fine church, of which Rev. John Roberts is pastor.

A. S. Palmer came from Floyd county, Iowa, in 1868. Was married in 1872 to Marcella L. Rice, daughter of Dexter Rice. Was, as mentioned on page 141, representative two terms, being the only representative ever re-elected in the county. He was also twice elected superintendent of schools. He has 200 acres, well improved, etc. He has four daughters, one of whom was married in June last to J. V. Pierson of Ponca.

John Malone, one of the pioneers of the county, is a well to do farmer of New Castle. He has a large farm pleasantly located on the road between New Castle and Ponca.

Alexander Curry, living near Malone's place, is also a farmer in excellent pecuniary circumstances.

Andy O'Comer is another old timer; came from New Orleans with his brothers in 1856, and farmed in the county ever since.

Gottlieb Rahn, came in 1870, has a large farm and like most of the New Castle farmers is well off.

Henry Richards, from Wisconsin in 1860. Has 320 acres and is in fine circumstances and a leading citizen of the township. He was supervisor in '88 and '89.

Thomas and W. A. O'Toole were from Pennsylvania in

1880. Each has a good farm of about 240 acres. They have families.

Wm. Sullivan, an early settler and has 160 acres well improved. Is married.

Owen Finnigan, 1870, married, and is a farmer with 160 acres.

There are other notable citizens and business men in Newcastle village, and many other farmers in the township, who on account of lack of information we are unable to mention.

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#### CLARK TOWNSHIP.

Is thinly settled and has much uncultivated land. The land is rolling, the soil is excellent and water is good and abundant. It has no timber except the groves that have been planted. There are four school districts in town. The population is about 325, mostly American born. Clark township is six miles square and is directly south of and adjoins Daily and has Cedar county on the west.

Captain Burdick was the first to settle in this township. He came here twenty-three years ago as agent for the Boston Land Co., which owned 45,000 acres in Dixon and Cedar counties, and a large tract of it was in this township. Captain Burdick purchased 160 acres of it for himself, built a house and made many improvements, and on his own land as well as that of the Land Company planted numerous large groves, several hundred acres in all. Captain Burdick sold his farm about fifteen years ago to A. J. Sparks and moved to Kansas.

A. J. Sparks has lived on the Burdick place since he bought it fifteen years ago. Among the many improvements and attractions on this farm may be mentioned the large groves and the orchard of apple and cherry trees.

John Donovan is the oldest settler now living in the township. He has been here nineteen years. He has three fourths of a section of land and is a enterprising farmer.

A. Coleman came here from Jones county, Iowa, fifteen years ago. Has a quarter section on which is the largest grove in the county. He has a large family, ten sons and daughters.

Perry Dempster was elected supervisor of Clark township a year ago and served until January 1st, 1896. He removed to the township in March, 1892, from Crawford county, Iowa, where he was census enumerator for that county in 1890. He has a half section of land, of which 190 acres are under cultivation, fine house, barn, groves and other improvements. His family consists of himself, wife and seven children, (four sons and three daughters,) all of whom are in Nebraska, excepting one daughter, who lives in Shelby county, Iowa.

J. Sullivan came here twelve years ago from Indiana. Has a farm of half a section, and buildings, grove, orchard, etc. Last winter he removed to Dixon village. His family consists of himself, wife and five sons and daughters. He was supervisor for Clark two or three terms and up to January, 1895.

O. C. and Henry Tuttle, farmers, have half a section, fairly improved. Came from Iowa fourteen years ago.

J. D. Reising, from Minnesota, fourteen years ago, has a farm of 320 acres, improved and well farmed.

W. H. Gibson came here from California about fourteen years ago and bought 160 acres of land. He and his family now live in Dixon village.

A. D. Morgan and J. L. Schouten are also well-to-do farmers, concerning whom we have been unable to obtain information, except their names.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## OTTER CREEK, GALENA SPRINGBANK AND EMERSON TOWNSHIPS.

## OTTER CREEK TOWNSHIP.

Bounded on the north by Ponca township, east by county line between Dixon and Dakota counties, south by Emerson and west by Galena and Springbank. It is nine miles north and south, and three miles east and west.

Otter Creek is hilly in the main, but has some fine bottom land. It has abundant cold, clear water in the creeks, as also in wells from ten to twenty feet below the surface. There is a small amount of timber along the streams, and nearly every farm has a fine grove. The soil is good even to the top of the hills.

The fertile South Creek valley passes across the north-western part of the township, and settlement was there made in the early days of the county. Prominent among the first settlers may be mentioned P. J. Winston, the Bigleys and Maurice Scollard, all of whom are dead. Maurice Scollard was one of the county commissioners in 1860-'61-'62-'63. Of his nephews, John Scollard still resides there, and Patrick Scollard died several months ago. In the north-western part of the township is the South Creek Catholic church, built in the spring of 1875.

Otter Creek has one village, Waterbury, a station on the Short Line railroad, which passes through the township.

The townsite of Waterbury, about eighty acres, was on May 29, 1889, donated to the Pacific Townsite Company, by George Herrick. The location is in a beautiful valley, twenty miles from Sioux City, twelve miles west of Jackson, seven and one-half miles from Allen, and eight miles south of Ponca.

The village is still small, containing only about forty buildings and 125 inhabitants, but it is a No. 1 market for grain, produce and live stock. It has a railroad depot, two

grain warehouses, two coal yards, three general stores, a harness shop, blacksmith shop, shoe shop, etc.

The leading business men are J. F. Hall, insurance, U. T. Forney (who built the first store here in July, 1890) and L. H. Whitman, merchandise; H. Sayre, postmaster; C. R. Noe, lumber dealer, and P. S. Beekley, station agent and grain buyer.

The Waterbury Creamery company completed this season a large creamery at the cost of \$4,000. An M. E. church costing \$1,200 was also built this year, (1895). Waterbury is especially favored as to water, which from the "big spring" (so called) near the railroad depot, ever flows a copious stream, pure and cold, which winter cannot freeze nor summer warm.

Those who have been or are now among the prominent citizens in Otter Creek, are the following:

George Herrick, formerly of Racine, Wisconsin, and afterwards of Yankton, Dakota, removed from the latter city in August, 1874 to where he now lives adjoining the townsite of Waterbury. There he has 880 acres of land, admirably improved and a residence not surpassed in the county.

C. C. Cleveland, from Wisconsin about 1875 located where he now lives. Has half a section, good improvements, and the best orchard in the township. His apples took the first premium at the Sioux City corn palace fair in 1892.

Henry and John Harney, are prosperous farmers, living near the South Creek church.

James Harding came in 1881 from Dakota county, owns two large farms.

James H. Cole came in 1882, had 200 acres. Moved to Ponca in 1894.

H. J. Stinger came in October, 1880, from Webster county, Iowa. Taught school three years and then bought a farm. He now has 120 acres, well improved by grove, orchard, fences, buildings, etc. Has a wife and four children. Has been supervisor for Otter Creek for three years, up to the re-organization in 1895.

M. Burgett, old settler, and moved in 1882 to a farm three miles south of Ponca.

J. E. Chase came from Jasper county, Iowa, in 1883 and has 200 acres where he now resides.







PATRICK SCOLLARD AND HIS SISTER, MRS. BLAKE.

(See page 237.)

Jacob Fegley located in Otter Creek in 1881 and in 1895 moved to Allen. Has a large family of grown up sons and daughters, all married and mostly living in the county.

C. M. Crowell, 1866, 160 acres, was county commissioner one term. Lately removed to Central City, Nebraska.

John Delaney, 1870, bought and settled on the 160 acres where he now is. Large family, mostly living in his vicinity. Has a magnificent grove of 80 acres.

Pat Cavanaugh, 1871. Has 420 acres, orchard, grove, etc.

John R. Hoopingarner has been here fourteen years, and has a fine farm of 160 acres.

Patrick Scollard, one of the wealthy and prominent citizens of the county, died at his home in Otter Creek township, May 1, 1895. Mr. Scollard was born in Ireland, and at an early age crossed the ocean to this country. He was one of the pioneers of Dixon county, coming here in 1856 with his brother and his uncle Maurice Scollard, who, during several of the first years of the county, was one of the commissioners. In 1862 the subject of this sketch enlisted in Co. I of the 2nd Nebraska cavalry, and was honorably discharged after a service of thirteen months. During his youthful experience as a pioneer, he and his mother and sister traveled across the plains with ox teams to Montana. While there, he was in the business of hauling freight to Fort Benton. On such trips he would be on the road five days without seeing a white person or white settlement. During those lonely trips he carried his provisions with him and slept in his wagon bed at night. He followed this hard life five years. Afterwards he returned to Dixon county and became a farmer. He was shrewd and careful and was generally successful in all business matters. He was married in January, 1875, to Isabella Traey, from Holly, New York. They have eleven children living, seven boys and four girls, the youngest two of whom, twins, were born seven months after his death. His death was very sudden. In the morning at about 8 o'clock he was busy at work in the field, riding a corn planter, and apparently in good health. Suddenly he was prostrated by paralysis, and was brought to the house, where he died at 1 o'clock, five hours after he was attacked. At the time of his death he left 440 acres, most of it fenced and cultivated, fine buildings, groves, orchard, etc., together

with cattle and horses and other property there and elsewhere. Mrs. Scollard and the family now reside on the pleasant farm which his energy provided for them. His portrait is seen in this chapter.

R. P. Williams, a native of Iowa, came to Dixon county in 1881 and bought a farm in Otter Creek of 120 acres, which he has since made valuable by improvements. In 1894 he was appointed superintendent of Dixon county's poor farm for a year, and gave entire satisfaction. Mr. Williams was all over Nebraska while a soldier of Uncle Sam during the war.

Fred Hall came to Otter Creek with his father, Geo. W. Hall, 24 years ago from Iowa. Each took homesteads of 160 acres. Geo. W. Hall died in 1888, leaving one son and seven daughters, all of whom but one reside in that neighborhood.

Among the many other good farmers of Otter Creek, we will mention the following:

John Bones, Fred Bollmier, M. Benton, Pat Bergen, Henry Marron, David Curry, Thomas Casey, J. B. Fleming, C. H. and H. A. Harper, J. C. Harrington, J. E. McGuire, Michael Mullaly, John O'Hara, L. P. Harper (now lives in Allen) and Samuel Roberts.

#### GALENA TOWNSHIP.

Is bounded on the north by Silver Creek, east by Otter Creek, south by Springbank, and west by Clark.

The township has the same kind of productive land which is general throughout the county and is well watered by creeks and springs. There are no more beautiful valleys than those along South Creek, Dailey and their tributaries, and no better water powers in the country for mills and machinery than are afforded by those streams. The land in the valleys is nearly level, back of which are low hills and rolling prairie. Throughout the township are excellent farms, good residences, orchards and groves, some of the latter along the creeks being of natural growth. The township has one village, Martinsburg, the commencement and growth of which has been traced in former chapters.

The founder of Martinsburg, Jonathan Martin, still resides there. He came to Dixon county in 1867 from Peoria,

Illinois. He was born at Fall River, Mass., in 1822. Came west as far as Chicago in 1839, when that place was a frog pond, and land there could be bought for \$3 an acre. He stopped there a number of years, worked at carpenter work and became a contractor and builder. Afterwards went to Peoria and was engaged in the distillery business, which in due time became extensive and profitable, and employed forty men for several years. In '66 he was assessed as worth \$70,000 but was soon after defrauded of a large amount, and selling out he removed to Dixon county, saving about \$20,000 with which to commence life anew. His first enterprise here was to build a mill two miles east of Ponca. In '72 he started Martinsburg, and built a grist mill and opened a store, which latter he still continues, and was postmaster several years. He was one of the county commissioners during '75, '76 and '77. Mr. M. was married in 1848 to Amanda Douglass of Onondaga county, New York. They have had five children, three of whom, daughters, are living and married. Mr. Martin is a citizen whose business energy in the past has been valuable to that locality, and he is rewarded by the general respect of the citizens.

Another prominent citizen of Galena township was P. G. Wright, who died in 1891 at his residence near Martinsburg, aged 73 years. Mr. Wright came from Iowa and had been a resident of Galena about fourteen years. During that time he was county commissioner several years and represented the county in the legislature one term. He was a just and reliable man and clearly understood his duties as an officer of the county.

John E. Schultz, one of Martinsburg's popular merchants, came from Wisconsin in '79, does a large business.

Ben and Burt McClary, sons of Thomas McClary of Silver Creek, have had a general store in Martinsburg since '88.

John Duren owns and runs the Martinsburg grist mill. He came from Wisconsin in '74. His mill is doing a large business and furnishes excellent flour.

Harry Filley, a soldier during the war, came in 1866 from Alamakee county, Iowa, and has in Galena a large farm on which he lived until a few years ago. He has since been landlord of the Martinsburg Hotel. In list of pioneers which is published in one of the first chapters, Mr. Filley's

name is erroneously placed among those who came here between the spring of '56 and the fall of '58.

Fred Jeffrey is Martinsburg's postmaster and has been since 1889.

Martinsburg has two churches, viz: The Congregational, Rev. Nichols, and the Lutheran, Rev. Hansen. Both of the church buildings are good and are largely attended. In the village is a well built, well arranged school house with two teachers and about fifty scholars.

Martin and William Lockwood came here from Waukon, Iowa in '70. Martin first lived in Springbank township and in '74 moved to Martinsburg and purchased an interest in the town site and mill. Afterwards was in the drug business at Ponca and in '89 went to South Sioux City where he now is. Wm. Lockwood first settled and still resides on a farm in Galena. Martin Lockwood Jr., a son of Wm. Lockwood, is also a good farmer of Galena township.

Wm. White came about '70 from Indiana and has a good farm near Martinsburg of half a section, where he and his family reside.

Matt Engle and John Engle are successful Galena farmers who came in '75. They have about 200 acres each.

Gottleib Keoppie has been here many years and has a large farm.

William Gillan whom we have mentioned as one of the pioneers, has a good farm of 200 acres near Martinsburg, where he and his family live.

Jacob and Sol Bombard live on a farm of 280 acres a short distance from Martinsburg.

Hugh Sweeney came from Galena, Illinois, in '70 and has a farm of 200 acres.

David Murphy, one of Galena's most thorough farmers, was born in Ireland, came to New York in '56; to Chicago in '59 and to Dixon county in '66. He has 480 acres in South Creek valley where he resides.

Frank and John Jourdan, born in England came to Galena about thirty years ago. Both took homesteads which they made into valuable farms. Frank Jourdan died August 1, 1894, leaving a wife and one daughter. He owned at the time of his death 311 acres of land all in a fine state of improvement. John Jourdan still resides on the farm he first

occupied and is well off. He has a wife and one son.

James Jeffrey located in Galena in '67 and died in '94. Left a large family.

Charles F. Schram, settled here many years ago and with his family lives on a good farm of half a section.

Lyman Wright, son of P. G. Wright, lives about three miles from Martinsburg where he has 200 acres.

Bernard Cavanagh, once a prominent citizen of Galena now lives in Allen. The large farm in Galena of several hundred acres to which he devoted many years of improvement he still owns.

D. Hurley, a prominent citizen of the county, was born in Ireland, and at an early age came with his parents to Watertown, Wisconsin, and in 1866 to Galena township. He was treasurer of the county from January, 1876, to January, 1882, six years, and afterwards represented Galena township on the board of supervisors one term. Mr. Hurley has a very valuable farm of 200 acres about a mile northeast of Martinsburg, on which he and his family reside.

Wm. Donlin, the first born in the county, as heretofore mentioned, now lives near Martinsburg and on the farm where that event took place. He has 240 acres.

Daniel Crowley, from Watertown, Wis., settled here in 1880. He has a good farm of 300 acres and is one of the leading citizens of the township. He was supervisor from January, '94, to January, '96.

Nick Wallenstein came in 1873 from Germany, where he was a soldier. Has 570 acres of valuable land, a fine house costing \$1,300, and other good improvements, among which is a mammoth barn, 58x60 feet. He is one of the most successful farmers in the county.

In addition to the foregoing are B. Dunlavey who came in '79 or '80; Hiram Wright, '76; Wm. Witham, '65; Wm. Krause and his sons, Gottlieb, Henry and William, Jr., '75, and Joseph Prue, '68; all of whom have farms of from 160 to 320 acres.

The farms above referred to are generally all well improved and desirable for profitable farming, and are pleasant homes for families. As a general thing also, the residents are in good circumstances and have enjoyable surroundings.

## SPRINGBANK TOWNSHIP.

Is six miles square and is between Galena on the north and Wakefield on the south, and has Emerson and Otter Creek on the east and Concord on the west. The Pacific Short Line R. R. passes through the north half of the township. The business center of Springbank is Allen.

There are no other villages in the township. About three miles due east of Allen and near the head of Elk Creek, is a small settlement where is the old Springbank post office, a school house, church, (Friends,) and a few dwellings. A few miles south of this settlement is another church of the same kind, (the South Valley church.)

Two large streams, South Creek and Elk Creek, together with a small branch of the North Logan rise in this township. These streams, with numerous smaller tributaries provide water in abundance.

Like most of the farmers of Dixon county, the residents of Springbank have devoted much time and energy to improving their farms and surroundings. Good dwellings, houses and barns, large groves and orchards, good fences and nicely arranged and cultivated fields are almost invariably seen.

It was not until 1869, that this township could boast of more than a handful of settlers. Some had come in the earliest days of the county but from fear of Indians or distaste for the lonely lives they had to lead, remained but a short time. Andy O'Conner and his brothers, James and John, are said to have been the first settlers. They took claims there in '56 or '57, two or three miles south of the Cavanagh farm in Galena, remained but a short time, and removed to new claims between Ponca and New Castle.

Among the most noted settlers who came there in 1869 and since then, may be mentioned the following:

E. E. Ellis, '69. He has been a prominent farmer and was Dixon county's representative in the legislature in 1893 and 1894. His farm (280 acres) is three miles from Allen village.

Wm. Ellis, came in '69.

Aaron Smith also came in the same year. Has a well improved farm of 240 acres near the old Springbank post office.

V. H. Herfel and his family came from Wisconsin in '69.



Has 240 acres, well improved, fine house, orchard, etc. Has six children.

John Herfel, brother of the above, moved here the same year, settled on 160 acres and now lives there. His family consists of a wife and seven children.

In 1870 the arrivals greatly increased. Among them were:

Joseph Isom, lives two miles south of Allen; has 420 acres, farmer and stockman.

Wm. H. Pomeroy, prominent farmer and citizen. Was supervisor of Springbank several terms and chairman of the board of supervisors in 1887 and 1888. He now resides in Allen.

Henry Allen. A part of his large farm became the town-site of Allen, which place was named after him.

Sol. Koser, J. Kellogg, Charles Kellogg, John Green and John Allen also came in 1870.

A. D. Whitford, 1871. Came from Wisconsin; lives one and one-half miles south of Allen where he has a farm of 240 acres; large family. Represented Dixon county in the legislature in 1889-90.

John F. Pomeroy, 1871. Farmer, has 240 acres. Was sheriff of Dixon county in 1884 and 1885, and was supervisor of Springbank five years and chairman of the board in 1899, '91 and '92. An excellent and popular county officer.

R. H. Pomeroy, 1871. For sketch and portrait see Ponca City.

Nelson Pomeroy, father of W. H. Pomeroy, John F. Pomeroy and R. H. Pomeroy, located in Springbank in 1871. He died about ten years ago.

Seth Hamlin, 1872. Is a successful farmer owning 900 acres of land. He was one of the county commissioners in 1884 and 1885.

S. H. Wheeler, 1872.

S. I. Hart, in 1877. Came from Dakota county where he had lived since 1867. Has 280 acres of choice and well cultivated land two and one-half miles from Allen, in which village he now resides.

James Stewart, who came in 1861 and Elijah Roberts and John Borg, are prominent residents of Springbank, and have

large farms. John Borg has one of the best in the county, containing 480 acres, five miles southeast of Allen.

Allen is situated on a slight elevation from which a view is had of a fine farming country, beautiful valleys and rolling prairie. It is on the Short Line railroad, and hence is a good market town, being in the centre of a very rich country and one which is thickly settled by well to do citizens. Allen naturally has a large business and a continued growth.

Allen was incorporated May 16, 1893, and now contains (Jan. 1, 1896) about 300 people.

As in all localities where education and religion are conscientiously looked after and advanced, Allen has a fine, new, two story school house, a graded school and good teachers. The town also has two churches, viz.: Catholic and Methodist, and the Campbellites have an organization. All have good attendance. There are also the Masonic, I. O. of O. F., and M. W. A. societies, each of which has a good hall and a large membership.

Among its prominent business men is W. A. Morgan who came to Allen about three years ago from Dakota county where he was born. Since coming here, he has been actively engaged in the mercantile business, and is a member of the firm of Armour & Morgan. He has been an efficient supervisor of Springbank for '94 and '95, and under the new law relating to supervisors, was in the fall of '95 elected to represent Springbank and Galena on the board of Supervisors for two years longer. With the other members of '95, his portrait is seen on another page of this book.

Another of Allen's prominent young business men is H. H. Hart, whose popularity with the citizens last fall elected him sheriff of the county. Mr. Hart was born in Richland, Keokuk county, Iowa, April 18, 1867, and came to Dakota county with his parents the same year, and to Springbank, Dixon county, in 1876. Was married, November 24, 1887, to Nellie Ison, who was born in Dane county, Wis., and came with her parents to Springbank. Mr. and Mrs. Hart have one child. A portrait of the group is in this chapter.

Wilson Brothers and Wm. Filley also have large stores and good stocks of goods.

W. L. Mote is the popular and gentlemanly cashier of the Allen State Bank.



MR. AND MRS. H. H. HART AND CHILD.

(See page 24.)



The two hardware stores are those of Tripp & Company and C. A. Coffin, the latter being also postmaster.

The Edwards & Bradford Lumber Company and Snyder & Company, have each large lumber yards in town.

One good newspaper, the Allen News, has been established several years.

J. K. Lennox has a real estate office, J. F. Hall deals in farm machinery, Jack Cavanagh has a livery stable, Mrs. Putnam keeps a good hotel, and C. A. Thompson and H. H. Hart buy grain.

Allen's physicians are Dr. Wanzer and Dr. Puffet. Such is a brief outline of a few of the leading kinds of business in Allen.

In Allen resides Henry Allen the founder of the town, S. I. Hart, Bernard Cavanagh, one of the first settlers of the county, and many other worthy and respected citizens.

In addition, Allen has a good railroad depot and telegraph office, freight office, warehouses, etc. A number of trades and kinds of business not above referred to are well represented in town.

#### EMERSON TOWNSHIP AND VILLAGE.

The village of Emerson is situated in the extreme southeastern part of the county, on the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha railroad, with a population of about 800. The Winnebago reservation, Thurston county, borders it on the south, and the county line between Dixon and Dakota counties is its Main street north and south. It was established in 1881 and is the junction of the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha railroad and its Norfolk branch. The first building erected was the depot, followed by three section houses. Boyle brothers built the fifth building where they kept a store, and Wm. Warnock built the sixth, which was the first dwelling house there.

In 1883 R. E. Kuhn platted the original town site and commenced the erection of a bank, which was completed in 1884, since which time additions have been made by D. W. Mathews, Atlee Hart, W. Warnock, Emerson Mill & Improvement Company, James Monier and others. The first lumber yard was started by J. J. McCarthy and M. L. Rositer, which is now known as the Edwards & Bradford

Lumber Company. A man by the name of Dean opened a real estate office at the same time, and afterwards removed to Sioux City, Ia. Two general stores were then opened, one by O. B. Morey and one by Paul & Flint. Flint dying soon after, the business was conducted by Paul.

Among the first residents who located upon the prairie and hills and founded the town of Emerson were Wm. Warnock, P. H. Boyle, H. S. Boyle, Patrick Banman, W. S. Lippold, John Engelen, M. Pruden, M. L. Rossiter, J. J. McCarthy, D. W. Parmalee, R. E. Kuhn, C. A. Johnson and Nelson Feauto. There are a few of the old homesteaders left on the homesteads in Emerson township yet; among them are Enos Demme, P. Kerwin, T. J. Beith, Wm. O'Neill, Sr., Wm. Kerwin, J. A. Mandaville and Wm. O'Neill, Jr.

The Echo was the first newspaper venture in the town, established in the spring of '83 by Nelson Feauto who was succeeded by Joshua Leonard, July 21, '85. Mr. Leonard changed the name of the paper to the Emerson Era and conducted it until '92, when it expired. In a few weeks thereafter Harry S. Swanson and Chas. S. Packard started the Emerson Enterprise, and the paper was sold to Frank Bancroft, who in December of the same year sold to H. W. Conley, he selling to S. E. Cobb, June 2, '93. The Emerson Times was established March 25, '93, with A. L. Moore as editor, but two weeks of journalistic life was enough for him, and the paper was sold to Z. M. Baird, he selling to E. E. Smith in March, '95, who is its present editor.

There are three good church buildings in the town. The Presbyterian, L. W. Scudder, pastor; St. Paul Lutheran, J. Bohnstengle, pastor; Catholic, J. Barry, pastor. The Presbyterians and Catholics have erected parsonages for their pastors. In '85 the school district was bonded for \$5,000 and a large, fine school building was erected which is a credit to the district.

The first secret society organized in the town was the Grand Army of the Republic, which established C. R. Weaver Post 185 on April 19, '94; J. F. Warner, then commander of the post at Dakota City, being installing officer. Among the charter members were William Warnock, B. F. Goodwin, John Bennett, I. M. Shockley, N. Feauto, J. Dixon, Charles Boyle, E. Barber and John Ward. The Masons organized

here Jan. 25, '93, with M. H. Evans, W. M., and J. W. Fisher, secretary.

In November, '92, a meeting was held in the town at which time the Emerson Mill & Improvement Company was organized, and the following spring, work was commenced on the Emerson Roller Mills, which were completed Jan. 1, '94. The mill completed cost \$15,000; has a capacity of 100 barrels per day and bin room for 10,000 bushels of wheat. The officers of the company are G. Y. Bonns, president; R. L. Currie, vice president; P. G. Fancher, secretary and treasurer.

Emerson has four general stores; Davis & Fuller, Kuntz & McCarthy, E. H. Monroe & Co., and the "Fair," with J. K. Lenox, proprietor; two hardware stores, Painter & Isenberg, and Krattle & Brustkern; two drug stores, John Connor and H. O. Armour & Co.; laundry, D. Beck, proprietor; two boot and shoe repair shops, Aug. Yenger and A. Assenan; one furniture store, Parmalee Bros.; two banks, Farmers State Bank, Geo. H. Haase, president, Fred Bloom, vice president, C. C. King cashier, German American Bank, J. J. McCarthy, president, Wm. Warnock, vice president, H. F. Moseman, cashier; two physicians, M. H. Evans and W. A. Lee; three attorneys, W. A. Martin, Paul Bergin and Joshua Leonard; two saloons, O. E. Danielson and McCoy & Hamm; meat market, Aug. Paul; two blacksmith shops, J. C. Winters and Doyle & Wellington; two lumber yards, Edwards & Bradford, Wm. Crahan, manager, and Jansen & Wiseman; two livery barns, Mark Engelen and Robt. Poole; contractors and builders, Jansen Bros., I. A. Omsted, Chas. Anderson, John Schaub; grain, flour and feed, L. F. Demers; two elevators, L. F. Demers and F. H. Peavey & Co., J. H. Ritchie, manager; school, T. E. Stevens, principal; S. E. Cobb, Myrtle Foget, Lulu Neihart, teachers; real estate, Wm. Warnock, Joshua Leonard and Boyle Bros.; dress making and millinery, Mrs. O. H. Lowe, Mrs. I. F. Squires and Miss Anna Clark; station agent, F. O. Paulger; operators, F. J. Hayden and F. B. Smith; live stock, Kellogg, Jensen & Schopke, Davis & Fuller; brick and tile works, M. A. Mines; creamery, Wm. Warnock; hotels, B. J. McDonald, Frank Jones, Mrs. Fligg, Enoch Beals; mail carrier, Chas. Varvais; postmaster, P. Kerwin; loan and insurance, notary public and justice of

the peace, W. Warnock; wagon shop, windmills and pumps, A. N. Carlile; harness shop, W. Metz; confectioners, John Estaque and Frank Jones; barbers, H. Parmalee, Jack Butler, Geo. McPherron; masons, Englen & McCallough; village board, H. F. Moseman, chairman; Jacob Jensen, Louis Swartz, L. F. Demers, A. A. Davis, trustees; H. Parmalee, clerk; C. C. King, treasurer; W. A. Martin, attorney; R. A. Poole, marshal.

We have been unable to obtain the particulars concerning the residents of Emerson township outside the village, except in a very few instances. Among them is J. I. Brown who has lived in the township about nineteen years, and has 200 acres nicely located and improved.

Patrick Kerwin has also been a farmer and land owner there for years before the village was started. He has been and is now a leading citizen of the township and is well known and well liked throughout the county. Aside from farming he has had other business enterprises, in all which he has had success. He is now the postmaster there. To Mr. Kerwin we are greatly indebted for valuable assistance in collecting facts in relation to Emerson village.

Another popular and influential citizen of Emerson is Wm. Sweeney, who has been the supervisor for that township during '92, '93, '94 and '95. His portrait is seen with the other members of the board for that year.

Wm. Warnock who from the foregoing is seen to be one of Emerson's most enterprising citizens, came there in 1881 and served as postmaster ten years, giving entire satisfaction to the citizens.

Emerson has many other worthy citizens in the township and village, than those we have mentioned. Outside the town is a fine region of country, good farms and farmers, and the buildings and improvements show unmistakable prosperity. In the town there are many fine residences and business houses.

Being an important railroad point, Emerson, has an assured future growth. The time is not far distant when its business and population will be at least double what it now has.



## CHAPTER XIX.

## LOGAN, WAKEFIELD AND CONCORD TOWNSHIPS.

## LOGAN TOWNSHIP

Is west of and adjoins Wakefield, and is bounded on the south and west by Wayne county and on the north by Concord township. It is a superior farming country. The land is rolling, the soil rich and water is plenty. The North and South Logan rivers pass through the township.

As in Wakefield and the other townships in the southern part of the county the soil is especially adapted to the growth of sugar beets. Fifteen tons to the acre is about the average crop.

Logan has no timber, except the numerous groves planted in the past twenty years, some of which are very large. The township has no village, and the market places are either at Wayne or Wakefield. Logan also has no post office. It had one established in an early day, Park Hill post office, so named after William Park, the postmaster. It was discontinued about January 1, '82.

Logan has 750 inhabitants, six school houses and one church, German Lutheran. A large proportion of the residents of the town are Swedes and Germans. They are an enterprising and reliable class of citizens, and as a general rule are prosperous and successful farmers.

George Fenton, who came with his family in the fall of '69, was the first settler. He and his wife now live in Wakefield. His old homestead in Logan, a well improved farm of 240 acres, he still retains.

A. F. Hinds, '70, and Pitt M. Hinds, '72, and their families; each had a good farm of 160 acres. A. F. Hinds sold out and moved away a few years ago, and now lives in Tennessee.

Pitt M. Hinds died in '94. His wife died in '72. Hers was the first death known to be natural in that part of the county.

Irvin Packer, one of Logan's settlers in '71, now lives in Minnesota.

G. W. Packer, who also came in '71, still resides in that township, and has a valuable 160 acre farm.

William Park, '72, lived in the township until '93, when he removed to Wakefield, where he now resides. He still retains his old farm of half a section in Logan.

T. J. Postlewait came in '73, and has been engaged in farming and stock growing.

Thomas Graham came to Logan in '74 or '75. He is now temporarily in California. Owns a farm of 160 acres in the township.

Frank A. Hypse came to Logan in '82, from Ford county, Ill., and has a farm of 160 acres, improved, with orchard, grove, etc. His family consists of himself, wife and five children. For several years Mr. Hypse has ably served Logan township as supervisor, his term ending in October, '95, when the board of supervisors was reorganized under the new law. His portrait is seen with those of the other members of the board on another page.

J. W. Hypse located in Logan in '83, has a large family and is a successful farmer. Was supervisor of the town for three years.

Frank Ruyter, an old settler, was county commissioner and supervisor several terms.

Gustus Johnson, from Ford county, Ill., in '82. The first Swede to locate in Logan. Has a 400 acre farm and good improvements and buildings. Has seven sons and daughters, all grown up.

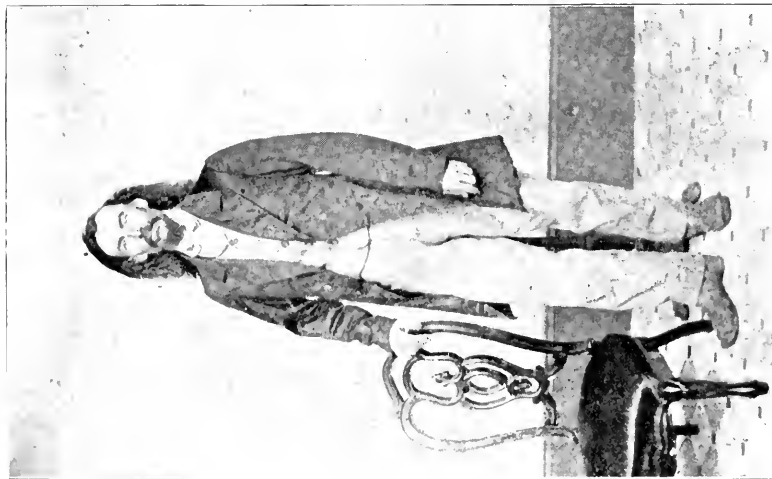
Chris. Wischhof, '84, farmer, has 220 acres. Prominent in township affairs and a reliable citizen.

Henry Lessman, '84, farmer, 160 acres, improved, stands high in the township.

The following are a few of the other farmers in town. Their farms are generally large and in fine condition as to buildings, groves, orchards, etc. The date of arrival, and the amount of land follow the names.

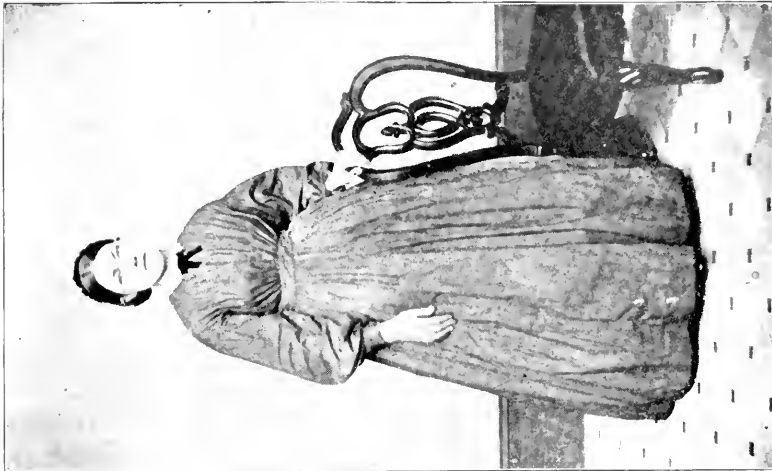
Andrew Beckstrom, '82, 160 acres; C. J. Swanson, '83, 320 acres; C. J. Frederickson, '84, 160 acres; Henry Meyer, '84, large farm; Henry Henrich, '84, large farm; Wm. Henrich, '84, large farm; Henry Rober, '84, large farm; Wm. Wilmer





C. T. BARTO, 25 years ago.

(See page 255.)



MRS. C. T. BARTO, 25 years ago.

(See page 255.)

'84, large farm; Wm. Lillie, '84, large farm; Flage, '84, about 400 acres; Ellis Ellison, '86, large farm; Olof Elliason, '87, 320 acres; S. M. Anderson '85, 160 acres; J. A. Johnson, large farm.

#### WAKEFIELD TOWNSHIP.

Is bounded on the north by Springbank, east by Emerson, south by Wayne county and west by Logan. The justly celebrated Logan river, and valley from two to three miles wide, passes through the southwestern part of the township, furnishing the excellent water power facilities which have been utilized by the flouring mills at Wakefield village.

One of the first settlers in this part of the county was C. T. Barto, whose frontier experiences here form an interesting part of the history of Wakefield. C. T. Barto was born in Bradford county, Penn., February 8th, 1837. His father, N. H. Barto, who was born at Bainbridge, N. Y., 1812, and still living, removed to Chemung county, N. Y., near Elmira in 1843. C. T. Barto married Estella Cooley, January 3rd, 1861, and removed to Illinois in April, 1861. There they rented a farm in DeKalb county, which they afterwards bought. In 1868 they sold their farm and started on their pilgrimage west and located in what is now Wakefield township on May 3rd, 1869. At that time the nearest settler on the road to Sioux City was Boedkey, twelve miles east of Wakefield, and the next Jesse Wigle, twenty-one miles east of Barto's place on Wigle creek, two miles south of the present town of Homer. South there was no settlement short of the Elkhorn river. West, no settlement short of Norfolk, at that time called Yellowbanks. The nearest post-office was twenty-four miles east in Dakota county and Major C. H. Potter was postmaster, and there also was located the nearest flouring mill run by a man named David and now operated by Sam Coombs. North there was practically no settlement nearer than South Creek, the Pomeroy's settling in Springbank in '70 or '71, and the Herfels and George O. Lumpher about the same time.

At that time Sioux City was the only market and over that forty miles Mr. Barto had to do all his hauling until '82. In the winter of '73, he spent sixty days on the road between his place and Sioux City, and carried his own hotel right

with him, and this was one of the coldest winters he has experienced since he has been in the state. For fuel he used wood which he brought from the Missouri river on his return trips. He would haul to market grain or hogs and bring back wood which he cut himself. Had he not come from a long lived race and hard to kill, these privations would have cut short his early career.

Mrs. Barto was born May 5th, '45, also in Bradford county, Penn. Her parents removed to Chemung county, N. Y., in '55. Her mother, Mrs. Elizabeth Cooley, died at Mr. Barto's place in January, '95, aged eighty-two years.

Mrs. Barto is well preserved, hale and hearty and promises to reach as good an old age as her predecessors in the family line.

The portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Barto, taken on their road to this country twenty-six years ago, will be seen on another page. Mr. Barto's long hair as seen in the picture, used to be greatly admired by the Indians, and to prevent their stealing it, (and perhaps his scalp at the same time), he had to cut it off. Mr. and Mrs. Barto have had seventeen children, of whom fifteen are living. They have a beautiful farm of 560 acres, all under cultivation or in use, groves, orchards, etc. Mr. Barto is a prominent citizen and much esteemed in the county. He was county treasurer for four years and has been and is now a leading member of the board of supervisors. With Mr. Barto, when he came, was C. I. Blake, also from Illinois.

In the fall of '69 George Fenton and family came and A. F. Hinds and family the following year. G. W. and Irving Packer and Pitt M. Hinds and family came in 1871, William Park in 1872 and T. J. Postlewaite in 1873. Of these, Mr. Blake settled near Mr. Barto, and the others located in what is now known as Logan township.

Mr. Blake now occupies the same place he located on in 1869. He has eighty acres and is a good farmer. His family consists of self, wife and several children.

Philo Graves was also one of the early residents of this township. His father, Willard Graves of Illinois, in the spring of 1868, located 40 sections of land (25,600 acres) in Cedar and Wayne counties and in the southern part of Dixon county, and in the following year brought here his family

and a colony of people, a large share of whom bought farms in Wayne county. A few, however, became residents of the present townships of Wakefield and Logan.

The first school ever taught in Wakefield township was by Miss Lucy Morey, who commenced January 7th, 1875. The children of Mr. Barto constituted the whole school. He was director, C. I. Blake was moderator and Philo Graves treasurer. The three were about all the heads of families in the district, and as the moderator and treasurer were unable to furnish scholars for the school, that duty devolved entirely upon the director as above stated. In those early days settlements were far apart. The great valley of the Logan, now thickly settled and rich in farms and improvements, was then nearly as wild as when under Indian sway. The few white people who came, had a lonely life, which for many years was almost unbroken.

In 1881, the railroad which was being built from Sioux City to Norfolk was completed through the town, and the station, Wakefield, was established. Immediately the sleeping valley was awakened to new life, and the few people who had ruled the township year after year, soon saw their number grow. Land which in past days of discouragement and home-sickness had been offered at less than government price, and could not be sold at any price, suddenly rose into notice and demand. Mr. Dixon, who for twenty years had a farm near where the village of Wakefield is, told us that he had tried time after time to sell his land at one dollar per acre. Rich and beautiful as was the valley, as long as its ocean of tall grass was undisturbed by a railroad, few wanted it. Finally the road came and with it came a great tide of ambitious and enterprising settlers.

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#### WAKEFIELD VILLAGE.

The village of Wakefield was incorporated in the summer of '83, having at that time more than two hundred inhabitants. The prime movers in the incorporation were Philo Graves the town site proprietor, and George W. Waite, at that time manager of the flouring mills, and a leading business man of the town, but now a live stock dealer in Sioux City.

Wakefield, like most western towns situated in a good level country, and which followed the completion of a line of railway and the establishment of a station, has had a steady growth, and for the most part her citizens have prospered. Many of her business men have obtained a start here, and gone to other places to continue a successful career. Others who have remained, are now the substantial men of the town.

The C., St. P., M. & O. railroad reached Wakefield late in the summer of '81; but ere its arrival the first enterprising comers were already erecting buildings. The town site was surveyed by Engineer Wakefield of Sioux City, whence the town derives its name, as well as from its wide awake people.

The first store was running in the fall of '81 and the building was put up by John T. Marriott, who owned and conducted the store. It was a medium sized, frame structure and stood opposite where the post office is now located.

George Childs also had a hardware store which stood a few lots south of Marriott's store. Both of these men are still in business in Wakefield.

In the summer of 1884 most of the brick buildings were erected from brick made at the Wakefield yards. The building of the Wakefield and Hartington line about this time, gave the town considerable impetus and her business substantial gains.

The first county seat town of Wayne county, La Porte, was mostly moved to Wayne, but three of the buildings were moved to Wakefield.

There have never been any fires of importance in the town, and now there is a complete standpipe system of water works, affording ample protection.

From a population of 200 in '83, Wakefield has increased to nearly 1,000 in '95, with every prospect of becoming in as much more time (a dozen years) a prosperous town of from 2,000 to 3,000 people. There are about fifty business houses or lines of business represented.

There are five churches: Presbyterian, Methodist, Christian, Swedish Lutheran and Swedish Mission.

The public school has 200 pupils enrolled, with five teachers in charge. The main building is brick, and a frame





HON. H. P. SHUMWAY.

(See page 261.)



building was erected this year at a cost of \$1,000 for the primary department. There is no school debt.

Among the leading business men is J. O. Milligan, proprietor of the Wakefield Roller Mills; Shumway, Everett & Co., lumber and farm implements, and representing the oldest established business in the town; Rawlings Bros. and A. L. Button, hardware; Wm. Harrison & Co., Ekeroth, Carlson & Co., Blotcky Bros. and D. G. Metcalf, general merchandise; C. W. Long and T. A. McKiehan, druggists; C. H. Merritt, furniture; C. L. Herrington and J. F. Slinger, hotel keepers; J. D. Haskell & D. Mathewson, and L. Kimball, bankers; C. F. Howard, jeweler; Nels Lingren, gunsmith and city engineer; Noah Weaver, wagon maker; B. C. Whitaker, harness maker and contractor and builder; G. W. Green, livery; C. E. Hunter, postmaster and justice of the peace; W. S. Cook and H. Lambert, buyers and shippers of live stock and meat market; C. Hinrich, meat market; Collins & Henry, clothing; I. M. Belknap and O. E. Martin, law and real estate; S. Osler, livery; Turner & Brenner, Peavey & Co., and J. O. Milligan, dealers and shippers; John T. Marriott, E. D. Smith, Nels Hansen and Jas. Malloy, real estate; H. A. Schoregge, bakery; Mrs. Frank Rice, millinery; Edwards & Bradford and Geo. Childs, lumber and coal; Ole Lundberg, shoe store; Wm. Wheeler, Wakefield Republican, established 14 years ago; F. M. Bloodhart, barber shop; D. W. Walker, cold storage; Charles Foltz, ice dealer; John A. Larson and A. G. Messer, contractors and builders; A. E. Quimby, contractor; J. G. Moir, harness shop; Paul Nindel, soda water and pop factory; Robert Kneeb's & Son, breeders of fine horses; Dr. B. T. Harman and Dr. Robt. Q. Rowse, physicians.

Wakefield societies: Masons, Odd Fellows, United Workmen, M. W. A., R. A. M., I. F. A., and Wakefield Building Association. All are in a prosperous condition.

One of the prominent citizens of Wakefield is Herbert Paine Shumway who was born at Caledonia, Minnesota, April 18, 1856. His father, J. Shumway, was a native of Connecticut, and his mother, Mary M. Shumway, was a native of Pascoe, Rhode Island. They moved to Minnesota in 1853, where was born to them a family of six sons and two daughters, of which the subject of this sketch is the

oldest son. He was brought up on a farm and attended district school in the winter until he was eighteen years old when he prepared for college at Caledonia Academy and graduated from the University of Minnesota at Minneapolis in the scientific course in June, 1882. He supported himself during his college course by teaching or working on a farm. In the following July he came to Wakefield, Nebraska, and engaged in the lumber business to which was subsequently added coal and farm implements. But believing there is nothing like the farming lands of Nebraska he has been for the past ten years occasionally buying lands until he now has an improved farm of 1,000 acres in a body lying in the Logan valley one-half mile from Wakefield. He is somewhat interested in politics and was elected in '90 to the state senate, being one of the two republican senators elected from north of the Platte river. In '92 he was an alternate delegate to the republican national convention at Minneapolis. He served on the staff of Governor Crouse as colonel. In '94 he was a candidate for the nomination for lieutenant governor and received 366 votes out of 806. Mr. Shumway has been a trustee of the M. E. church of Wakefield since it was built in 1882. In Wakefield, Mr. Shumway's influence has always been devoted to the promotion of the best interests of the place and citizens. He is chairman of the village board and is, as he has always been, prominent in advocating improvements and beneficial enterprises.

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#### CONCORD TOWNSHIP.

Is bounded north by Clark, east by Springbank, south by Logan and west by Cedar county.

Concord township has two villages, Concord and Dixon, the first located on the Hartington branch of the C., St. P., M. & O. R. R., and the latter village on the Short Line road.

The township is generally level or slightly undulating. There are plenty of springs and streams and the Logan passes through the south half of the township. There is little native timber but nearly every farm has a good grove.

Outside of the villages the township has four school houses and good schools.

In the early days of the county there were also, as we have seen in this history, two villages named Concord and Dixon,

but in nothing except names were they identified in any manner with those of the present township of Concord.

One of the leading residents of Concord township is Willis Jenkins, who was born in New York; went to Illinois when 21 years old and the next year to Iowa, and from Iowa in '78 came here. He was married in Iowa and has a son and daughter. He has half a section and first-rate improvements. He was the supervisor of Concord in '86, being the first member from that town after township organization was adopted. When Mr. Jenkins came to the township there were not over half a dozen settlers there before him.

Wm. Cowie who came here about twenty-three years ago is now in Missouri.

W. W. Crain came twenty-six years ago, and now lives in Benton county, Ark., where he removed four years ago.

Henry Thompson, (the father of the supervisor of '95) was in the township when Mr. Jenkins came. Mr. Thompson has a farm of 200 acres and is well fixed in every way.

G. O. Acres came and settled on a homestead in 1878. A sketch of him appears in connection with that of Concord village.

H. D. Hall came here eleven years ago, and has a well improved quarter section of land. He was supervisor in '91 and '92.

P. A., C. J. and C. H. Nelson, from Iowa, and Mike Carroll and John Gillan, from Wisconsin, came nine years ago and have good farms, from one-fourth to one-half a section apiece.

Robert Delay came about eight years ago from Iowa and has 200 acres.

All those mentioned have good houses and most of them orchards and groves.

Wm. B. Hall also came from New York 11 years ago and has a valuable 160 acres.

J. W. Thompson was supervisor for Concord in '93, '94 and '95. His portrait appears elsewhere. He is an intelligent and successful farmer and stock raiser, and was an excellent supervisor. In mentioning Mr. Thompson in the list of supervisors on page 136 we have written his name as William Thompson. It should have been J. W. Thompson, as appears by his signature below his portrait.

H. D. Hooker came from New York nine years ago and bought an improved half section. He died a few years ago. His family still reside on the farm.

John B. Lysle, John Eckert, Wm. Haberman, Mr. Bosse and Wm. Shilling, came from Iowa nine years ago and have good farms and are successful farmers.

Royal Thompson located here about 20 years ago. He now lives in Concord village.

James Barnhill first came about 14 years ago. Has been absent part of the time since. He farms on a quarter section.

Joseph Classman, from Minnesota, has been here six years. He has a farm of 120 acres and is fortunate in business.

John Newman is another enterprising farmer. Came from Iowa eight years ago and has 160 acres.

Thomas Long has been here eight years. He owns the old Royal Thompson farm of a quarter section.

John Mills came here a year ago and bought Porter Dewey's farm of 80 acres.

Jerry Sullivan lives in Dixon village where he moved from Clark a year ago.

Mr. Trow has been here four years on his farm of 320 acres.

C. W. Gurney, the proprietor of the Hesperian Nurseries of Concord, came from Iowa about 14 years ago. He bought 200 acres on which he has since had a large nursery business. He recently removed to Yankton.

Concord village contains about 150 inhabitants and has not been incorporated. The two villages, Concord and Dixon, are only two miles apart. Both are good business points.

Geo. O. Acres, a leading citizen of Concord village, built the first house in that vicinity and ferried all the lumber across the river at Sioux City with which to build it. Mr. Acres was born in '55 at Manchester, Iowa, and came to Nebraska in '78 and settled on a homestead in what is now Concord township, where he lived until the fall of '89, when he bought out the lumber and coal business of Shumway & Everett at Concord village. He sold lumber, bought live stock and grain until 1893, and was interested in all improvements in Concord. In '90, when the Concord State Bank

was instituted, he was elected a director and was an active worker, helping to make it one of the best banks in north-eastern Nebraska. In '93 he became cashier, which position he now holds.

The village of Concord has now two good stores of which Messrs. Clark and Kemp are proprietors and Mr. Clark is the postmaster of the place. H. Shilling deals in hardware; Dr. McColm has a drug store; R. N. Smith, harness shop; John Brannaman, billiard hall; G. O. Acres, lumber yard, and Mrs. Foote has a hotel. There is also a grain buyer there in the interest of the Peaveys. The Concord State Bank does a good business under the cashiership of Mr. Acres.

Concord has a good school and one church, (Swedish) a fine building and well attended.

Dixon village was incorporated May 16, 1893, and now has a population of 250. A good steam grist mill is in operation here, owned by Keil Bros., and does a successful business. An energetic creamery company has built and operates a large creamery. It is an establishment of much benefit to the town and surrounding country. Among the business men and houses, we notice C. Stimson, banker; O'Flaherty Bros., merchants, stock dealers and grain buyers (and really a large share of the life of the town); A. E. Sparks, general merchant; J. C. Ecker, druggist; D. Carroll, hotel, grain buyer, etc.; G. P. Wright, hardware; E. W. Clawson, agent of the Edwards & Bradford Lumber Co.; Isaac Brannaman, furniture; W. H. Gibson, postmaster and grocer; J. Nichols and David Ayers, restaurants; G. W. Holder, market; C. Brannaman, livery; F. Wiedenfeldt and G. W. Hayn, blacksmiths, and one interesting and well supported newspaper, the Tribune. Dixon has a first-class school and teachers. The school house, a fine, new building, was burned a few months ago, and another will soon be completed to take its place. There are two churches, the Catholic and Christian, each of which has a good building. Dixon has also lodges of Modern Woodmen, Good Templars and Knights of Pythias, all in a flourishing condition. Dixon is a pleasantly located young business place, it has good buildings and its citizens have the right kind of push and energy to make their town grow.

PORTRAITS OF DIXON COUNTY TEACHERS.

One of the principal engravings near the title page of this book presents a group of ninety or more of the teachers who attended the Teachers' Institute at Ponca in August, '95. The engraving is from a photograph taken at the time by Mr. Hamilton, and a list of the names of those whose portraits appear there has been kindly furnished by Miss Mary Schroer, the popular school superintendent of the county. The following is the list:

Estella Forney,	Mabel Fero,
Daisy Herrick,	Charlotte Wasson,
Dora Kavanaugh,	Ada Phillips,
Julia McQuillen,	Rosa Kingsbury,
Stella Wilcox,	Minnie Thompson,
Mrs. J. V. Pearson,	Mertie Cummings,
Evalena Rohan,	Hunter Brown,
Vida Palmer,	C. Wright,
Mrs. Hetta Surber,	Anna Walbeck,
Isa Ward,	Lizzie Cavanaugh,
Mary McKinley,	Anna Doyle,
Mrs. J. M. O'Connell,	Jennie Robinson,
Chara Gordon,	Ella Kingsbury,
Stella Brown,	Geo. Beith,
Anna Sheffel,	Katie Byrne,
Anna Wenstrand,	Kate Bones,
Lillie Busby,	Jessie Bailey,
Mrs. B. H. Culver,	Eliza Park,
Elizabeth Everett,	Emma Anderson,
Ethel Duncan,	Jennie Bovee,
Jessie Scott,	Lizzie O'Connor,
Swain Olson,	Attie Acres,
Edna Hamilton,	Irene Boekenhauer,
Albia Brown,	Minnie Beers,
Irene Stover,	Rosa Reising,
Will O'Connor,	Kate Sullivan,



L. M. Powers,	Mary Keegan,
John McClusky,	Evelyn Palmer,
J. V. Pearson,	Adda Martell,
Maud Jones,	Lillie Shellington,
Cassie McKinley,	Kate Marron,
Carrie Harper,	Florence Busby,
Ida Lockwood,	Gertie Grosvenor,
Hallie Bennett,	Carrie Stewart,
Frances Stimson,	Minnie Beardshear,
Myrtle Weaver,	Minnie Sheffel,
Lettie Heikes,	Rose Hughes,
Myrtle Foget,	Lizzie Armstrong,
Clarissa Flageolle,	Minnie Mills,
Lucy Flageolle,	Gertie Culp,
Rosa Byrne,	Jessie Gibbs,
Maggie Malone,	Anna Leggett,
Mrs. C. E. Davis,	Bert Brown,
Prof. H. E. Kratz,	Cora Scott,
Mary Schroer, Co. Supt.	Mamie Dewitt,
Prof. F. M. Harding,	Lottie Cassavant,

There were a few on the picture when it was first taken which do not appear there now. In order to fit the engraving to the size of the book, a small part had to be taken from the sides of the picture, and by so doing the following teachers were unavoidably left off:

Thuie Poff,	Maud Woodward,
Mrs. H. J. Caulfield,	Dennis Kimmaman,
John Richards,	Mamie Jones,
Mrs. May Porter.	



PART SECOND.



#### NOTE.

Legends, stories, adventures, every day incidents, etc., etc. All relate to Dixon county in the past or present. Some of them are true in every word and others are, in a greater or less degree, founded on facts. But whether fact or fiction, we trust they will be found interesting, and with that hope we dedicate them to friendly perusal.



## AMONG THE INDIANS.

## ADVENTURES IN THE DIXON COUNTY COUNTRY IN 1810.

In the spring of 1810, more than three-quarters of a century ago, two young and energetic men who were ascending the Missouri in a canoe, landed at the mouth of the stream known at present as Aoway Creek, about four miles east of where Ponca now stands. Thus commences a story related to us twenty-five years ago by a venerable hunter and trapper who had passed nearly his whole life among the Indian tribes of the northwest.

The two men above mentioned were Scotchmen, lately from their native country and who, instigated by love of adventure had wandered off into this region, then so remote from civilization and society, a country whose reputation was most dreary and repulsive.

The names of these hardy adventurers were Alexander Mackenzie and Donald Campbell. The first was many years later in the employment of the Northwestern Fur Company, while the latter, Campbell, became afterward celebrated among the tribes along the upper Missouri and Yellowstone under the name of I-och-e-gah, or White Chief, as one of their most distinguished and successful warriors.

Our adventurers, as they coasted along the muddy, turbulent river, saw the little stream debouching through an opening in the hills, and were glad to rest from the wearing labor of urging their canoe against the rapid current, by landing and camping under the shade of the trees upon the bank. At a short distance to the right and left they beheld rough, high hills, and were struck by the wildness and rugged grandeur of the scene.

Here they camped, and determined to rest a few days, and perhaps explore and hunt game in the grim regions indicated by the forbidding hills surrounding them. In the little clump of timber where they pitched their tent they saw no

sign of life, and as the gloom of the approaching night fell upon them, made ten-fold worse by the deep shadows of the bluffs and the sighing of the wind through the ravines, it seemed to them that they had entered the kingdom of solitude. Here they built their fire, ate, drank, and in their blankets slept undisturbed.

In the morning they arose invigorated, and after a hearty breakfast started westerly along the south bank of the creek, determined to explore the interior of the country. A wearisome tramp through brush and marsh and further west along a wide and level tract, brought them where several valleys converged; a spot which by its beauty and the splendor of its scenery, fully compensated them for all their toil. Here, no longer within the dominions of solitude, they beheld life and animation at every turn. The grass gaily decorated by a wilderness of brilliant flowers formed a rich and enticing carpet for their feet. As they advanced, the joyful music of countless songsters of the wood and prairie greeted them. Along the neighboring hillsides they saw herds of buffalo, while in the distance they beheld a large and populous Indian village.

Startled by finding themselves in the neighborhood of an Indian town, and not knowing whether their reception would be friendly or hostile, they nevertheless hesitated not to go forward as coolly and apparently as unconcerned as though among their native Scottish hills. As they approached the village, its inhabitants, most of whom had never before seen a white man, came out to meet them, and received them with kindness and honor, so greatly did they admire the undaunted yet evidently peaceful bearing of their two visitors.

So kind a reception determined Mackenzie and Campbell to remain several days and learn the ways of Indian life. The pipe of peace was often smoked around the council fire. The best lodge, the softest bed of furs and the choicest game was dedicated to them. They on their part showed their new-found Indian friends the mysterious workings of their guns, which, speaking with voices of thunder, could kill a buffalo at a great distance. Such weapons had never before been seen by the tribe, and were a source of great astonishment and awe to them.



After a few weeks of this luxury, most fascinating to the frontiersman, the Scotchmen proposed to depart and resume their journey up the river. But the Indians, who it seems, had made up their minds that their guests should stay with them always, objected, and with various excuses refused to let them go. Once they stole away at night, and had nearly reached their canoe, when through the brushwood rushed a horde of Indians in hot pursuit, who seized them and triumphantly bore them back again.

Thus time passed on, the greatest kindness was lavished upon them, so great indeed that feeling their bonds as a chain concealed beneath garlands of flowers, their captivity was in a measure bearable.

Soon they became acquainted with the language of their entertainers, who took much pains to teach it to them. They went with them on their visits to other villages of the same tribe, of which there were several within a day's journey, and they twice assisted in beating off the raids of a band of desperate warriors, Arapahoes, under the redoubtable Mishtenewah, who had a town in the valley now known as the Daily. Mishtenewah's tribe seemed to be at enmity with all the others along the river. He was a most cunning, indomitable old scoundrel in whose vocabulary any word signifying "peace" had been utterly blotted out.

Finally, in one of his forays, he was so far successful as to take several prisoners, and among them was Campbell. Mishtenewah did not stand long on ceremony after getting back home, but burned the Indian prisoners at the stake without unnecessary delay. The white man, however, was a curiosity he had never seen before, and he reserved him for further investigation. Campbell, on his part, took the scrape he was in philosophically, and explained to the grim Indian king who he was and where he hailed from. He also caused Mishtenewah to expand his massive jaws into a grin of delight, as he showed him the skill with which he slaughtered game with his wonderful gum, the like of which the chief had never heard of before.

So Campbell's life was spared, and he was formally installed as one of the tribe. He was taken to the lodge of an ancient squaw and informed that she had adopted him for her son, her own son having been recently killed in battle.

Mishtenewah, besides being great in war, had other ambitions of a more peaceful character. He had a large number of wives already, but his harem was like an omnibus, in that it could always hold one more inmate, especially if she was youthful and good looking. In the village was a young and very handsome squaw named La-sha-na, upon whom the chief cast a longing eye, and was determined to take her to wife. The girl was, however, averse to the royal honor offered her. She had seen and admired the good looks and brave demeanor of Campbell, and they had found such a mutual attraction in each other that they often wandered away together, and looked and talked love as they sat beneath the council tree of the village. (This is said to be the great tree long noted as the Lone tree of the Daily valley. It is some three feet in diameter and its trunk is indented with the numerous cuts and carvings of the tribe which flourished around it.)

It certainly is not to be wondered at that Campbell should prefer the society of this young Indian lass, to being cooped up in a not very sweetly smelling tepee with the mumbling old crone who by the verdict of the tribe called herself his mother. It was at this time that Mishtenewah saw the girl and licked his bloody chops with joy, for he thought he saw another sheep for his fold. She on her part avoided him as much as possible, and hence the loving walks and tete-a-tetes with which Campbell and the young squaw whiled away many pleasant hours, were in the evening, the better to avoid the sight and anger of the chief.

One evening as the pair sat beneath the waving branches of the great tree, contemplating a speedy flight from that irksome captivity, old Mishtenewah came nosing mistrustfully along, and seeing them, he drew his knife in jealous fury, and swiftly sprang forward to prod Campbell with it, then and there. And he would doubtless have done it, had not Campbell, equally as quick, knocked him down with the butt end of his gun. He would have shot him, but the noise would have aroused the village. Concluding that his enemy was knocked senseless but for a short time, and knowing that such an insult to the chief would not be overlooked, Campbell and the girl, without delay, fled. They made as quick time as possible down the valley, cautiously avoiding

other Indian settlements, intending to seek the protection of the tribe where Campbell's friend, Mackenzie was. They had come to within a few miles of their destination when they heard an uproar behind them, and the rays of the moon brightly shining, revealed Mishtenewah and his whole pack in full pursuit. So certain was he of their capture that he even disclaimed to adopt the usual Indian tactics of stealth and silence in the pursuit.

It would appear that the old chief's skull was of a very tough and durable nature, so that the pounding it received did not prevent him from collecting his senses and wits together within a very short period of time after the fugitive lovers had left. He roused the town in a trice and he and his band of marauders followed the fleeing pair, who now, just as they were approaching a haven of rest and safety saw their pursuers bursting upon them like infuriate thunderbolts. Close pressed, the fugitives made for the hills along the west side of the valley, hoping to throw their enemies off their trail. But well trained bloodhounds could not follow their path with greater exactness. Campbell and the girl flew like the wind, yet closer came the whooping and howling band of savages behind them. Thus mile after mile was measured off, over hills and through ravines and valleys, yet their untiring and implacable foes followed on, evidently lessening the distance between them every moment.

In that fearful flight, Campbell and the girl must have crossed the hills and struck the Aoway valley some two or three miles west of where Ponca is. Leaving the valley they again sought refuge among the hills and ravines toward the river. It appeared to be of little use however. The yells, tearing through the night air like the blood-curdling voices of infuriate demons, resounded nearer and nearer. After crossing Aoway valley the fugitives turned their course somewhat to the northeast, hoping they would be able to reach the banks of the river in the treacherous waters of which they deemed they would find far greater safety than in the hands of the miscreants behind them. Thus onward they sped, while gleaming knives and tomahawks flashed forward a warning of the bloody harvest soon to come. They struck the bluff overlooking the river, a few hundred yards

east of what is now known as the Bigley ravine. Half a mile to their left was a small Indian hamlet, but by its insignificance it could afford them no protection, even if they were enabled to reach it. Without pause they rushed down a narrow gully or water course at that point, in which a path now leads to the low land along the river. As they emerged from the ravine into the heavy timber below they heard the rush of their pursuers down the defile.

Let us go back a little. A quarter of an hour before, a large party of keen-eyed Indian hunters accompanied by Mackenzie, returning from a trip along the river bank had ascended the same ravine. On reaching the top of the bluffs they saw in the distance the swiftly approaching fugitives, and heard the deadly yells of their pursuers. Resounding above all others was heard the terrible voice which they recognized as that of the much hated Mishtenewah. They saw the fugitives turning their steps toward the head of the ravine. Mackenzie and his Indian friends quickly formed their plans for vengeance on Mishtenewah and his band. They knew that down that ravine both pursued and pursuers would pass. With a grunt of satisfaction the hunters slipped noiselessly back into the thick brush overhanging the sides of the narrow gorge. The fugitives passed down, not dreaming of friends and almost worn out by their desperate exertions and expecting death in a few moments more.

Suddenly, above the yells of the furious Mishtenewah and his band, were heard other shouts, the twanging of bow-strings, the whizzing of arrows and tomahawks, and all the crash and din of a deadly conflict. The roar of Mackenzie's gun as it reverberated through the forest was to Campbell the sweetest music. Mackenzie and the hunters had quickly prepared an ambush for their enemies. They arrayed themselves along the sides of the ravine, and when Mishtenewah and his warriors entered, and down which they could only go in single file, they fell upon them with fearful rage and slaughter. In ten minutes the battle was over. Not one escaped. All were dead and dying except some fifteen or twenty who were taken prisoners, their lives being spared solely for another and more dreadful tragedy. Among these was Mishtenewah. The next day, with the

torturing ceremonies then customary among Indian tribes toward their enemies, the prisoners were burned at the stake.

In the joy of once more meeting his brother Scot, Campbell did not forget the beautiful young squaw. He was duly married to her according to the Indian rites and customs, and it is to be hoped their lives passed smoothly and happily. About a year after this occurrence, Mackenzie went with a party of hunters far to the north, and his friend never saw him again. As for Campbell, he now remained willingly, and conforming to Indian customs and dress, soon became chief of the tribe. Here, under his wise administration his tribe prospered and remained until the year 1814, when the tide of Indian wars drifted them far away to the northwest beyond the Yellowstone valley.

This story is referred to in one of the early chapters of this book, where, as will be recollected, the mound is described in which the bones of Mishtenewah and those burned with him are supposed to have been buried.

## THE SACRED ROCK OF THE ARAPAHOES.

## A LEGEND OF THE IONIA VOLCANO.

More than a hundred years before the exploring expedition of Lewis and Clark (whose visit to the so-called Ionia volcano is referred to in Chapter IX), the country up and down the south bank of the Missouri for many days journey, was the dwelling place of a vindictive and powerful tribe known and dreaded as the most blood-thirsty nation of Indians between the Mississippi river and the Rocky Mountains.

This warlike people, the progenitors of the present cruel and untamable Arapahoes of Wyoming, was ruled by hereditary chiefs, assisted by counsellors selected from their most successful warriors, and were described as having been tall, active, of prodigious strength, undaunted bravery and remarkable cruelty.

Like the Aztecs of Mexico, from whom, doubtless, they had received in ages long before many of their customs and beliefs, they were fire worshipers, and sacrificed to the god of fire the sick, the aged and the infirm of their own nation, and all prisoners taken during the wars which they were continually waging against their neighbors, and especially against the numerous tribes across the river, who, under the general name of Acontahs (afterwards called Dakotahs), occupied the vast regions lying between the Missouri and the Red River of the North.

About two miles south of the place where in later years has been seen the volcanic phenomenon referred to, was the capital town of the nation, vestiges of which were still visible at the time of the visit of Lewis and Clark in 1805, the many excavations and mounds where the town had stood indicating that it had been of great size, covering indeed, several hundred acres. Here had dwelt the hereditary chief

or king, whose simplest word was law from which there was no appeal, and who held unquestioned power over the lives of his subjects.

Whatever the "Ionia Volcano" may have been, the Indian tribes at that early time, and especially the superstitious Arapahoes, regarded its fires with awe and the region near it as sacred ground, over which, within certain limits, no one had the right to pass except the ruling chiefs and their medicine men. He whose boldness or folly led him to violate this decree, paid for his temerity with his life. This taboo, however, was removed every full moon, at which time all the tribes might assemble around the volcano to witness the horrible sacrificial ceremonies there enacted.

On these occasions the old and feeble were dragged forward, the prisoners taken in battle and the squaws and children from conquered towns, and all were immolated with prolonged and merciless torture, to the deity whose immediate presence was supposed to be revealed in the lurid flames and stifling vapors around them.

A short distance to the west of the volcano and within the limits of the tabooed precinct, stood an immense rock, which, from its description, must have towered several hundred feet toward the sky, a vast square fortress in appearance and visible at a great distance. The rock was honey-combed by numerous passages, caused by the action of water ages before when an ocean covered all this country. One of the passages led to a large and lofty cavern which nature had in like manner hollowed out in the interior of the rock.

Here, say the old legends, on a stone platform or altar rudely built by the Indians, the preliminary ceremonies and torturings of the unhappy victims took place before they were consigned to the embraces of the more merciful fires of the volcano.

At the time of the visit of Lewis and Clark this great mountain of stone had disappeared and the place where it was said to have stood was occupied by a marshy pond. When inquiry was made as to what had become of it, the bravest warriors would tremble with awe as they related the gloomy legend, that, a thousand years before, the Great

Manitou had been angry; that his voice had been heard like the roll of many thunders, and that in his wrath he had crushed the rock into the earth.

Such a phenomenon would at this day be regarded as merely one of the results of a tremendous earthquake—most interesting, but nothing supernatural, yet, among the ignorant and superstitious savages it would naturally be considered as a special sign of vengeance of an outraged deity. To this cause, the destruction of their sacrificial temple, is attributed the flight of the greater portion of the tribe immediately after the catastrophe to the far west, leaving forever a home which they deemed as accursed by the Great Spirit.

Among the present Arapahoes (the descendants of those who thus migrated), the "Legend of the Great Rock" is remembered, recounting the disaster which drove their ancestors from their former fertile plains to the sterile mountains of Wyoming. According to this Arapahan legend, many hundred years ago, their nation, as yet not driven from its home near the Missouri, was in the height of its glory and strength. Their warriors were as numerous as the blades of grass, and disgraced, indeed, was he who could not count his years by the number of scalps upon his shield.

Then ruled Kah-da-che-gha, whose name (signifying "The Bloody Hand,") carried terror to his enemies. For many seasons his braves had been waging a war of conquest and extermination against the Wapahas, a once strong tribe and one of the numerous families of the Acoutahs, whose towns were across the river and one or two days' journey to the north.

Among the Wapahas were many warriors of distinguished valor whose backs were never seen by their foes, and who acting on the defensive, had held their enemies at bay during a long and fearful series of conflicts. At length, conquered and over-run after desperate resistance and nearly annihilated, the captives taken were driven southward by the triumphant Kah-da-che-gha toward the capital town of his nation.

Among the prisoners was a young warrior named Wachepah, (or "Long Knife,") who had become renowned for his bravery and the numerous Arapahan scalps which deco-



rated his girdle. Only taken when six of his assailants were slain, he could, of course, expect no mercy from his enemies.

After a weary march across the prairies, he was brought with his fellow captives to the Missonri, across which, swift and gaily decorated canoes speedily conveyed them. They arrived at the town of the warlike Kah-da-che-gha most opportunely, for it wanted but two days of the great full moon festivities, at which time, these prisoners, with many others, the fruits of various raids during the past month would be sacrificed and burned according to their ancient customs.

The young captive, Wa-che-pah, well knew the fate which was in store for him and his fellow unfortunates, yet, with the stoicism of his nature, he looked forward to the approaching disgraceful tortures and death with indifference, nor would he have deigned to have asked for his life, even could he have obtained it by so doing. On the contrary he sought to improve the little time remaining to him, by recounting to his enemies his many exploits against them, and bringing to their memories the long array of scalps which their nation had hitherto furnished to his knife.

On the day before the sacrifices were to take place, as Wa-che-pah gazed upon the group of despondent captives he saw to his horror among them, two, whose lives he would have purchased by submitting to all the indignities which the ingenuity of Ka-da-che-gha and his tribe could invent. These two were his young brother and sister upon whom he had centered all his affection, and who, until this moment he had supposed to be in a place of safety, and now discovered them in the clutches of those whose mercy was only shown when they permitted death to seize the tortured victims.

When the young warrior saw the helpless children thus in the deadly toils of his enemies, he sought out the chief and asked that which he would have scorned to have done for himself, namely, that their lives might be spared. Such a request was an act of folly, which, on cooler reflection, he would never have humbled himself to commit, for sooner might he have expected mercy from the hungry wolf of the prairies.

In answer to the petition, the chief consented in part to grant it, on conditions, however, in which were displayed a refinement of cruelty, most diabolical. He would spare one of the children, if Wa-che-pah, previous to his own death would act as the executioner of the other. As the price of his brother's life, Wa-che-pah, must inflict on his sister all the tortures to which he, himself, would afterwards be subjected. The young chief well understood the meaning of the terrible sentence thus pronounced. His hand would bestow the agonies of a thousand deaths. Eyes wrested from their sockets; the limbs slowly burned off by means of red-hot flint-stone knives; the skin torn in strips from the body, which, after being immersed in boiling pitch, was to be hurled into the ever-burning fires of the volcano.

Wa-che-pah heard the horrible and revolting proposition—cast his eyes around unavailingly for a friendly knife or tomahawk with which to visit vengeance on the dastard chief before him—and then, hoping to discover in the future some chance of escape for the sister he loved so well, consented. Leaving the presence of his vindictive enemy, Wa-che-pah again found himself wandering amid the groups of doomed captives. The sight of his brother and sister filled his heart with despair. As to them, they were yet so young as to imperfectly realize the horror of their position, and as they saw their brother approaching, all dangers and privations were forgotten. With shouts of joy they flung their arms about him, and with many caresses, implored him to take them back to their distant home. As he stood, listening to the innocent and childish prattle which pierced him like the stroke of a dagger, he moodily revolved in his mind their chances of escaping the doom which the next morning's sun would reveal.

Were there no means of escape? In all directions triple lines of pickets closely guarded them, and attempts to break through were vain indeed. At the north the battlements of the sacred mountain reminded him of the gloomy cavern, its dreadful altar, and the fate awaiting one at least of the innocent children who clung confidently to him. Night came on. The savage guards closed about their victims. For the last time they saw the moon rise, smiling in

her fullness, pass over, and sink in the west. Dawn again appeared. Then, to the deafening sound of drums, and in the center of the death dance, in which thousands of warriors participated, the captives were swept slowly forward, as by a resistless tornado, toward the grim rock and the fearful destiny which there awaited them.

Clinging to Wa-che-pah, his young brother and sister went joyfully, thinking they were starting for their home again. About half way from the village to the place of sacrifice, Kah-da-che-gha appeared, arrayed in his barbaric war costume, and carrying upon his hoop the numerous blood stained scalps which his hand had taken. At his command the revolving dance was stopped, and addressing Wa-che-pah, he renewed the fearful proposition of the day before, and asked him if on those terms he was prepared to save his brother. The agony of the young warrior at that moment before his enemy no tongue can portray. Yet, with a countenance apparently unmoved, he replied in the affirmative. Then the little brother, wondering, was torn hastily from his sister, and the savage dance recommencing, the captives were again urged toward their doom, now near at hand. "Darling of my soul," said Wa-che-pah to his sister, "listen to my words. Our brother we will see no more until we meet him in the hunting grounds of our fathers. He will remain here a little while, but we shall go forward before him." The sadness of his voice, more than his words, revealed to her the presence of some dread danger. "Let us then," continued he, "go joyfully - the Great Spirit and our fathers call us."

Understanding for the first time his meaning, his sister realized that the revolving circle of dancing demons about them were conducting them to their death. With a shudder she pressed closer to her brother's side, thus mutely expressing her willingness to make the dread journey with him. The captives, slowly approaching the rock, were now within the shadows of the lofty pinnacles which towered above them, and in front of which, the chief and his medicine men had assembled. To the right, the dense smoke of the volcano revealed the god of fire in waiting to receive his victims.

Thus approaching the goal the orgies of the demoniac horde grew wilder, and as they swiftly rotated in their infuriate dance, the captives, deafened by the terrible yells which resounded on all sides, saw the air darkened with a rain of innumerable knives and stone axes which were hurled over their heads. This pastime of their enemies was, however, harmless, as such weapons were skillfully thrown, not to injure, but merely to extort signs of fear, and were but the prelude to the tragedy yet to follow.

At a sign from the chief the chaos and uproar ceased, and the medicine men stepped forward to receive the prisoners. These unhappy wretches, some of whom were squaws with frightened children clinging to them, were now arranged in a close column and driven forward into the main entrance to the interior of the rock.

At the head of the procession and leading his sister by the hand walked Wa-che-pah, to outward appearance fearless and undaunted, as became a warrior. Thus passing on they were soon assembled in the cavern, whose gloom was but partially dispelled by the torches and the fire upon the altar. Here were the knives with which the cruel work was to be done—sharpened stakes for impalement, and upon the fire a stone caldron of seething pitch. Wa-che-pah, lifting his eyes from the appalling preparations before him, met the gaze of Kah-ta-che-gha, who, pointing to the trembling child at his side, ordered him to commence the torture. Thus brought face to face with the awful deed with which he was compelled to purchase life for his brother, the soul of the young warrior revolted. He grasped the knife, but instead of turning its glittering blade toward his sister, he hurled himself upon the chief with the fury of a thunderbolt. The rage and strength of a lifetime was concentrated in that moment, as he stabbed his fiendish enemy again and again, and hurled him, a scalpless corpse, among his followers.

Animated by the desperate valor of the young warrior his fellow prisoners rushed upon their guards, from whom, wresting knives and tomahawks, they drove them from the cavern with the slaughtering fury of madmen. Dripping with the blood of his foes and uttering the war-whoop of his tribe, Wa-che-pah led forward the captive braves and after

a conflict which choked the passage-way with dead, expelled their enemies from the rock.

From the outside thousands, as they saw their temple thus desecrated by the slaughter of their friends, arose the yells of a fury which knew no bounds. But now, as though to stay the bloody carnival, a terrible manifestation held both sides aghast and powerless. The ground beneath them and the rocks above reeled and trembled as if the Great Spirit had smitten them with an angry hand. Far below was heard a roar like the concentrated thunders of a thousand years, and with a crash the earth was torn open and the great rock sank into the abyss and disappeared, consigning living and dead to one common grave.

## INDIAN CRUELTY.

## THE MURDER OF THE WISEMAN CHILDREN.

Though Dixon county has never since its settlement by white people been made the scene of Indian war and cruelty, yet near by in the adjoining county of Cedar the barbarous and cold-blooded murder of the Wiseman children by the Indians took place in the summer of 1863.

Henson Wiseman and his family had in '60 or '61 taken a claim near the Missouri river on what is called "Brookey's Bottom" in Cedar county and about two miles from the Dixon county line. His family consisted of his wife and five children, viz.: Three sons aged respectively 17, 8 and 5 years, and two daughters, 15 and 13. Mr. Wiseman's nearest neighbor was Mr. Brookey, who lived two miles away in Dixon county, and another neighbor, Mr. Ames, lived about three miles in an opposite direction, in Cedar county. Aside from these, Wiseman and family had no neighbors nearer than the village of St. James, some four or five miles distant.

In 1862 Wiseman enlisted in Company I, of the Second Nebraska Cavalry, and in the spring of '63 went up the river with his regiment to join Gen. Sully near old Fort Berthold, in the campaign against the Indians. Wiseman's absence left his wife and children entirely alone. They remained on the claim, and with the occasional assistance of their neighbors, Brookey and Ames, cultivated their land and, aside from the loneliness of their location, were content, having no thought of danger.

Across the river, however, and not many miles away, the Indians were brooding over imaginary troubles and dreaming of war. They had heard of the massacre in Minnesota by the Santee Sioux, and their ambition had thereby been aroused to also sharpen their knives and gain a name and a rich collection of scalps. Wiseman's family did not realize the exposed and dangerous situation they were in.

Near the river and far away from neighbors, Indians might, if they saw fit, come at any time and perpetrate barbarity or murder. Unconscious of this danger the Wiseman family had no thought of leaving their claim, and indeed they were not molested for sometime after Wiseman went away. This security, unfortunately, was not lasting.

One day in the summer of '63, Mrs. Wiseman went to the village of St. James to buy groceries, leaving the children at home. She started on horseback in the middle of the afternoon and expected to return before dark. But when at St. James a rain came up and she was delayed on account of it, and did not reach home until nearly nine o'clock in the evening. Supposing everything as safe as usual, she placed her horse in the stable and started toward the house. A few feet from the door she stumbled over the body of one of her sons. Frightened but not yet realizing that a terrible tragedy had taken place, and thinking that her son had met with an accident, she rushed to the door to call for help. As she opened it she heard groaning within and other sounds which she thought were from Indians, whom she then imagined were in the room concealed by the darkness, and waiting after killing the children, for her to enter and meet the same fate. Terror-stricken and hardly knowing what she did she turned and ran to the road and thence toward St. James. The few miles were quickly passed, yet the time seemed an age. There she reported what she had seen and heard and implored immediate help. The people in St. James were frightened and slow in responding. In the excitement which ensued they believed the timber along the river contained a horde of savages who, in number, equalled the trees which concealed them. The news that Mrs. Wiseman had found her children murdered, traveled quickly, as evil tidings always do.

Mr. Ames, the neighbor who lived three miles from Wiseman, was then at St. James and heard the story, and rushed home and taking his family into his wagon drove all night towards Ponca, reaching there before sunrise the next morning. There he reported the massacre, and immediately, N. S. Porter and three others returned with Ames to the scene of it. When they arrived at Wiseman's they found the

people of St. James had come and taken the children to that place. Of the five children, everyone was killed or fatally wounded.

The following is the story of the murder as near as could be ascertained:

It took place only a few minutes before Mrs. Wiseman arrived home that fatal evening, but when she opened the door, she heard no Indians in the house. They were gone, and what she heard were the struggles and groans of her dying children. Had it not been for the rain she would have been at home when the Indians came. Possibly that would have saved them, but probably she would have added one to the number of the slain. As was learned by the tracks in the mud, there were four Indians who participated in the massacre. When they entered the house, the oldest girl was churning, and they asked her for a drink of buttermilk. She handed them a dipper of it, when they struck her over the head, knocking her down, and it is to be mercifully hoped, senseless. At about this time the oldest son, who had been hunting, returned and opened the door. Instantly he realized the situation and made a gallant defense of his sisters and younger brothers. He died fighting and his was the body which Mrs. Wiseman stumbled over in the yard on her return from St. James. The barrel of his gun was bent by the blows he had given his assailants. The eldest girl lived five days but never spoke after she was found by her friends. Her person had been brutally outraged and mutilated, the back of her head crushed, a cartridge had been exploded in her mouth and an arrow pierced the lower part of her body, passing out above the hips. Though she lived five days she was unconscious. The youngest child, a boy of five years, lived three days. The other three were dead when found.

The four Indians who committed this terrible crime were supposed to be Yankton or Santee Sionx. They came across from Dakota in a canoe, and after the murder they robbed the house and took a horse on which they loaded the plunder and swam it over the river. News of the murder was immediately sent to Sionx City and a company which had recently been recruited there started out to capture the murderers if possible. They took their trail at the crossing



at Wiseman's and followed it north until near Sioux Falls and there they lost it. The wretches who committed the deed were never caught. For anything known to the contrary they may be at this moment posing as "good Indians" on some reservation.

In a few weeks after the murder the news of it reached Wiseman at Fort Berthold. As soon as he heard it he went to Gen. Sully and told him what had occurred and asked for a furlough, and was humanely granted an indefinite leave of absence. He immediately started on horseback for home where in about ten days he arrived. It is said that on fully learning the fate of his children, he swore that he would kill every Indian who crossed his path. No one can blame him for the oath or for his justifiable vengeance during the thirty-three years that have passed since then. He has killed many and his name is a terror to them. But the four he has most wished to find he has never knowingly met. He and his wife still live where the tragedy occurred.

## THE REALM OF FICTION,

WITH AN OCCASIONAL FACT THROWN IN.

### THE BRAZILIAN TRAVELER AND THE NARROW GAUGE RAILROAD.

A TWENTY YEAR OLD PARABLE CONCERNING DIXON COUNTY'S NARROW GAUGE RAILROAD AT THAT TIME—ITS EXAMINATION BY SENOR ALGAMONEZ AND HIS CONCLUSIONS THEREUPON.

[Those who read this old parable should, in order to fully understand and appreciate it, first read the chapter in this book entitled "Story of a Rascally Little Railroad." This parable, though now somewhat out of date, will, perhaps, be enjoyed by old settlers who remember the time and road referred to.]

In the summer of '77 Dixon county was visited by Senor R. de Algamonez, an illustrious savant, scholar and traveler from the ancient city of Penumblebuz, Brazil. Taking shipping at Rio Janeiro, on the twenty-fifth day of July, he journeyed in the Brazilian war brig Physsle, to New Orleans, where he arrived August 18th. From thence, in the staunch steamer Waterwitch, he ascended the Mississippi to St. Louis, from whence in a Missouri river boat, the "Riproarer," he came up the Big Muddy and disembarking at the landing, walked from there into Ponca.

The object of the visit of this distinguished Brazilian gentleman may be explained in a very few words. It appears that divers disputes and differences of opinion having arisen between the people of the counties of Dakota and Dixon on the one part, and the Covington, Columbus & Black Hills Railroad Company on the other, concerning the said road, its gauge, its management, etc., and desiring to settle all

these matters harmoniously, it had in the early part of the summer been determined by a committee of citizens duly selected from said counties, that some good and unbiased person be appointed to examine with a vigilant and impartial eye into all the disputed questions, and upon such arbitration make due decision as to which of the contending parties was in the right, which decision it was determined should be binding (all courts to the contrary notwithstanding), in order that law suits might be avoided and that peace and good will might prevail.

In looking around for such arbitrator it was found to be impossible to obtain him in Nebraska, as every man had formed an opinion, and hence could not act with the impartiality which the importance and gravity of the case demanded. The committee then scoured other states for their arbitrator; they even went as far as California to hunt him, but there were none, not even the Chinese and Indians, but had heard about this railroad, and had made up their minds. In desperation the committee finally applied to the emperor of Brazil who at that time was traveling in the United States, and he after mediation, referred them to Senor Algamonez, and issued an order that said senor should immediately come and adjudicate in the matter. The order was forthwith transmitted to Brazil by steam balloon, and in obedience to such command, the senor started for this place at the time above stated.

Hence it came about that at three o'clock one afternoon, this well known scholar walked into town, and as he had no time to spare, he declined all receptions and other tokens of respect from the citizens, and immediately proceeded to the business on hand, viz: To interview the road, its officers, etc., and we desire to say here that Senor A. was peculiarly well fitted to act in this matter impartially, as, although he had often read of railroads, he had never in his life before seen one. Thus at about 4:30 p. m. he crossed the bridge near Bigley's and soon was seen pacing down the valley east of town. As he moved forward he beheld before and around him a landscape unsurpassed in the gardens of the gods, and he felt assurance that this was the choicest region under the sun. Everything seemed different from his native country, and the many improvements unfamiliar to him

struck him with wonder and admiration, and he examined critically and carefully many things which a resident would have passed unnoticed. As he walked along delighted with the pastoral beauty of the scene, he suddenly saw before him two tiny parallel strips of iron stretched along the valley, the sight of which filled him with amazement, as he could not comprehend for what purpose they had been placed there. "What these little rods were designed for," said the Senor, "I am at a loss to understand. Doubtless, however, some inexpensive yet pretty plaything, which perchance the inhabitants of this country have considerately and kindly provided for their children."

As he thus meditated, he suddenly heard from the east a feeble squeak, and saw a small cloud of white vapor which seemed to be rolling slowly toward him. On closer inspection he saw through the smoke, what appeared to his unsophisticated gaze, to be a gaily decorated, four wheeled boiler or wash pot, from whence came the smoke, and to which were attached several small covered carts. Such a singular scene, so different from anything he had ever heard of, induced him to postpone all further search for the railroad until he had investigated this gay and gallant little string of vehicles. He was touched also at the sight, and was almost moved to tears, for it reminded him of his home in distant Penumbubuz, and of his children who in their play made wagons out of strings and spools.

"If I ever get home," said he as he wiped his eyes, "I will take to my infants a whole box of just such nice little toys as these."

Pausing in his walk, he waited until the phenomena approached, then turning and walking leisurely along by the side of the gay train of wagons as they advanced at full steam up the valley, he found much pleasure in critically examining them, walking around them and stepping over them, to determine their magnitude, kneeling down and looking under them to see the wheels revolve, leaning over them in order to see both sides at once, and feeling of them tenderly with his hands lest something be dissarranged.

It was in fact with great curiosity and satisfaction that he viewed the cavalcade rolling along, and in his ecstasy he exclaimed in his native Brazilian Spanish, as was his custom

when excited: "Wha tan infer na l'umbug!" (Which being interpreted signified, "What a wonderful invention!")

"These carriages," said he to himself, "must indeed afford infinite amusement to those who see them. And so inexpensive, too," and he laid his hand caressingly upon them.

Then a fearfully heavy voice issued from the smoke, and was heard saying:

"Sir, you mistake; this is not an inexpensive child's toy, but one which has cost Dixon county \$87,000. It is the lightning express train on the C., C. & B. H. Narrow Gauge Railroad and I am the general manager thereof, and I will thank you to take your hand off the engine so that we can get along."

"Ho le Mozees!" ejaculated the senior in astonishment. "And so it cost \$87,000! Well, well! But even that is inexpensive if the dollars are as lilliputian as the railroad."

"No," replied the gruff voice, "the dollars are of the standard gauge and are secured by bonds, which operate as a mortgage on all this fair county. Then we get \$95,000 more out of Dakota county. Then we have mortgaged the road for \$90,000 more, the whole amounting to \$272,000 for building the road twenty-seven miles. Could you do better than that in Brazil? And it is a great thing for Dakota and Dixon counties. We carry their freight nearly as cheap as they used to haul it in common wagons, and passengers are conveyed at but a trifle in advance of the old fashioned price. People also have the fun of seeing this train run every day up and down the valley, and for the sight, in consideration of the \$272,000, we don't at present make extra charge. Nor have we made so much as you might think in this enterprise. We have not saved to exceed \$70,000 out of the \$272,000 after building and equipping the road."

"Verily," quoth the senior, "all this is wonderful to me. Ab igg rabb!" which, being interpreted, means that it "shows remarkable financiering."

"But will you build it further this year?" continued the senior.

"Yes," replied the voice, "we have the iron for eighty miles more; we also have the ties, and we are having our work done cheap, very cheap indeed."

"Where is this vast amount of iron and ties?" inquired the senior.

"They will be found in the affidavit lately made before Judge Dillon in the case of Hubbell vs. The Company. But I must hurry along; good bye."

As Senior Algamonez was returning toward Ponca after thus interviewing the railroad train and the general manager, he was so stricken with amazement at what he had seen and heard that he could not but reflect that it might be most expedient for him to throw up the commission which brought him here, and retire by the shortest route from the country.

"And especially," said he, "do I desire once more to see my native land, for I have caught an idea that will make me rival the imperial Dom Pedro in riches. As soon as I get there I will set forth with my children and we will dig a furrow across the plain which lies between the cities of Penumblebuz and Baradocia, and along the apex of the welt then made, we will stretch two slim spindles of iron, and thus we too will have a railroad. Allured by the wonderful invention which I will bring from Dixon and Dakota counties, Penumblebuz and Baradocia will hasten to vote me bonds for \$182,000, and I will mortgage the road for \$90,000 more. Thus with my money and my road I will be rich. My brother Azbigasell shall be master mechanic, and he shall build and guide the little wagons whose wheels, like revolving fly specks, shall bowl along. My cronies, Toda and Lick-mishoe, and also my progeny, shall stand around and see that the peons build the track and bridges, and shall also see that they do the work for nothing, for I cannot afford to pay out the money I shall earn with such hard thought. As for me, I will be the General Manager." Thus meditating, he noticed a heavily laden freight car standing on the switch at Ponca depot and stopped to examine it.

"This tiny and fragile shell," said the senior, "is nevertheless as neat and commodious as the hollow of my hand. My brother Azbigasell shall build me several of these. The temptation comes strong upon me, born doubtless of my new views of life since my interview with the General Manager, to appropriate and carry off this little box. Yet greatly as I desire to pocket it, I will resist the thought. I might have

to throw out its load of grain, and God forbid that I should waste even a kernel of corn, much less these several quarts of good wheat, and thereby deprive some poor fellow of a meal."

As he turned regretfully away from the temptation, he again heard in the distance the shrieks of the little train, whose quivering squeals pathetically reminded him of the little pigs that played about the streets of Penumblebuz.

On his return to Brazil a few weeks after, Senor Algamonez went into the business of railroad building, taking as a pattern the road he had seen.

It may be of interest if we relate how the senor succeeded in his undertaking.

Penumblebuz and Baradocia are, as is well known, situated in a remote part of Brazil, wherein, hitherto, no railroad had been built. Hence, when the senor after his return home, suggested such an enterprise, the citizens of that country were greatly delighted, and especially were they pleased to think that the road would be continued to the rich mining and lumber region of Terra Del Fuego, thereby opening an avenue of trade and commerce, establishing markets for produce, etc.

Baradocia immediately voted \$87,000 in bonds and Penumblebuz voted \$90,000, to be paid when the road was completed between those places. As the distance across the plains between the two towns was not great, (about twenty miles,) this large amount in bonds was encouraging, as it was more than sufficient to complete the work. Yet to make the road surely successful in a financial point of view, the senor before commencing work, mortgaged it for \$4,500 per mile. Thus he had an abundance of means wherewith to triumphantly carry out this great project of internal improvement, and hence set to work with a cheerful heart. He employed all the men and teams within a two day's journey to come and work, and they shoveled and dug, and with so much industry and diligence that in a short time a ridge of dirt was developed across the plain. Then a vast number of little sticks were hauled in and laid upon the apex of the ridge. Then many pounds of iron in long strips were nailed upon the sticks in two parallel lines, some three feet apart, thus forming the track. Then a whole wagon

load of engines and cars were brought and planted on the track. Then the whistles of the engines tooted, the bells rang and the people shouted for joy, and they said: "Behold the Narrow Gauge! Lo, the Pemmblebuz, Baradocia & Terra Del Fuego Railroad is a success."

In his business excitement the senor omitted (unintentionally) to pay those who had dug up the ground for him, who had hauled dirt in wagons, who had brought in and laid down the little sticks and who had furnished the iron, the engines and cars. But he was reminded of these slight omissions when the bills were presented. From the bills it appeared that the entire charges for all these matters amounted to about \$75,000. The senor could, of course, have paid that amount readily, for the bonds from the towns and the mortgage on the road, had realized \$274,500. Hence after paying the \$75,000, he would have nearly \$200,000 left, and he would also have the road, which he very properly estimated to be worth something. At least the track had some market value, even if he considered it as no more than old iron.

But the senor wisely concluded that even if he were making a good thing out of the enterprise, it was no sign that those who furnished the iron, ties and labor should charge the exorbitant sum of \$75,000 therefor, consequently he very properly refused to pay a cent of it.

When the ungrateful people who had been blessed with a railroad, tried to force him to pay, he put all his property into the hands of his brother Asbigasell, rather than submit to extortion. Thus we perceive that virtue triumphs in Brazil as well as in this country!

Then those who held the mortgage foreclosed the same, a receiver was appointed to take the road, and the senor went into bankruptcy, broke down and with the money safely buttoned in his pockets, retired like a persecuted martyr from a remorseless country! Such is the brief history of the P., B. & T. D. F. R. R.

After these vicissitudes the senor again came to this country where thereafter he proposed to reside and engage in the construction of railroads. He contemplated locating at some center of vast enterprises of that kind and join in the work with other capitalists of like ambition.



"We will," said the senior, "combine our intelligence and capital, and will build (or at least we will promise to build) railroads for those localities which will vote bonds to us. We will, perchance, form a society, which for its great usefulness and beneficence, will be handed down to posterity under the distinguished name of 'Unbung swindlers,' (which being interpreted from the Brazilian signifies, 'A confederation of narrow gauge magnates.')

Thus honored and prosperous in this world, we shall in the next be entitled to fill comfortable stations in that radiant clime where cold weather never penetrates."

### DIXON COUNTY'S CAVES.

#### AND PROFESSOR PERRIGOUÉ'S REMARKABLE DISCOVERIES OF PRE-HISTORIC VEGETATION AND ANIMALS THEREIN.

The story of Dixon County's alleged great caves and the marvellous discoveries there about twenty years ago by Professor Jeremiah Perrigoué, will to most readers be found more interesting than an unromantic journey through a dry and unembellished routine of facts and figures.

Jeremiah Perrigoué came to Ponca in '75, and for several years dug wells and ditches, and when he had leisure hunted in the rocks and bluffs along the river for minerals and fossils, desiring to find gold, silver or coal; or if he could not strike a deposit of such valuable minerals he hoped at least to unearth a plesiosaurus as Mr. Brewer had done some years before. By the aid of an old book on geological formations and the ancient gigantic vegetation and animals that once were on the earth, he accumulated a long list of jaw-breaking names like *Thascolotherium*, *Ichthyosaurus*, *Pterodactyl*, *Lepidodendron*, *Dinotherium*, *Giganteum* and others, and though he could not talk very learnedly about those ancient vegetable and animal productions he certainly could discourse glibly concerning them, (and probably with as much knowledge of what he was talking about as the majority of mankind) and about the cretaceous and carboniferous ages and the old red sandstone and Potsdam periods, as familiarly as though he had been well acquainted with them all his life.

During the summer of '76, some parties dug a large hole

near Ponca landing for the purpose of finding coal. The shaft was four feet in diameter and was sunk to a depth of eighty-five feet, when becoming discouraged and out of money to continue the work, the parties abandoned the enterprise. Mr. Perrigoue, whose geological researches along the bluffs had given him the name of "professor," was one of the workmen, and when the shaft was abandoned he assumed possession of it and proposed to make further investigations on his own hook.

A few days after, he appeared in town and announced that he had made some marvellous discoveries, and had passed through experiences so incredible and astonishing that he hesitated about telling them. He said that during the greater part of two days, he had been at least a thousand feet under ground and had traveled miles and miles through a great net work of lofty caverns. If his story were true, one would be led to believe that Dixon County was above an immense, petrified, primeval forest of the carboniferous age, in which were trees fifteen to forty feet in diameter, and the fossil remains of many of the ancient organic beings of that period. Animals which, in everything excepting life, appeared as natural as when they were on earth a million or more years ago.

The story of his subterranean travels and discoveries as he related it, was indeed wonderful. If he did not actually see what he claimed, he might have dreamed it, or if he did not dream he may have been overcome by an unharnessed imagination run wild. But here it is, substantially:

While the shaft above referred to was being dug, Prof. Perrigoue said he noticed that the workmen were greatly troubled in their digging by water, yet when they had penetrated to a depth of about 60 feet the water suddenly disappeared. This phenomenon was precisely what happened in that vicinity a few years before when Mr. Wernimont was boring for coal. Reflecting on this, Prof. Perrigoue came to the conclusion that the leakage was caused by a fissure in the rock communicating with some opening beneath and possibly with a cavern of greater or less dimensions.

Animated by this hope, he set to work after the shaft had been abandoned by the others, and determined to make a thorough examination of it. As he descended to the bottom

of the shaft, 55 feet, he carefully examined its sides, (the last forty feet of which were in a rock formation) and he discovered a long, narrow seam extending from the bottom upward a distance of twenty-five feet or more, through which had escaped the water referred to. Near the bottom of the shaft he was enabled by a miner's pick to easily enlarge the crevice to the distance of a few feet, the rock being soft and porous, and to his joy he saw the seam had widened to such an extent that no further labor was required to pass through it. The direction of the crevice was northeasterly and descended at an angle of about 50 degrees.

Carefully groping his way along in the dim light of a miner's lamp, he had entered the passage not to exceed two hundred yards when his route turned sharply to the left and a most startling scene met his gaze. He saw a vast cavern beneath, through the roof of which opened the crevice he had followed. This subterranean world was pervaded by a weird and ghostly light coming from whence he knew not but the cause of which he afterwards ascertained.

The roof of the cavern was supported by an innumerable number of what appeared to be immense stone columns of great diameter at the base. He noticed that these columns were not stalactites, which, as one may say, start from the roof and grow downward; but were larger at the floor and became smaller as they ascended. In this as well as in other respects, they resembled trees; thus, frequently a column at the height of a few hundred feet became divided into many smaller branches, and would finally be lost in what a slight stretch of imagination would picture as an ocean of foliage, now, however, by the process of petrification, turned to stone, and forming the roof of the cavern.

On descending to the floor of the cavern, which he easily did by means of the petrified foliage, he found that the massive columns were, indeed, fossil trees, probably the *lepidodendra* and the *sigillaria*, which are often found in coal formations, and were gigantic in size, from 500 to 800 feet high, and most prolific in foliage. Hence he concluded that he was in an ancient petrified forest, and he naturally inquired how it was possible that this vast primeval growth of enormous trees and magnificent foliage could have been thus buried so far below the visible world, and by what freak,

nature had planted and sustained upon their tops the rocks and hills of Dixon County.

From these reflections, coupled with the knowledge of the assertions of geologists as to the different formations of this country, he came to a conclusion, which, although in some respects at variance with geological theories, is probably the only one by which the phenomena can be accounted for. His opinion was that ages ago when this immense forest grew and flourished, the floor of the cavern was the surface of the earth. That the great inundation spoken of by geologists as having occurred during or shortly after the carboniferous period, covered the forest to the topmost branches, and that this beautiful and fertile country was overwhelmed by a great inland sea, sweeping down from the north with vast force, and bearing upon the surface of its rapid current, great masses of ice, earth and even rocks, which, finding a small lodgment at first upon the top of the forest, was added to year by year during the countless ages of the flood's continuance, until where once was a wide waste of water, the fair hills and valleys of Dixon County, rose in all their beauty like Venus from the foam of the ocean. But the foundation beneath was sound and secure, the same power that planted 600 feet of rocks and earth upon its top, transformed the forest and its foliage into the hardest flint, upon which a much greater weight could rest with safety. Then when the flood passed away, it left the ancient forest as Professor Perrigone now found it.

From this theory he deduced other conclusions, viz: If this were once a forest, he would find within it the petrifications of the ancient gigantic animals which made it their home. Should he not find them, too, as perfect in their preservation as were the trees and plants about him? Animated by these thoughts, he resolved to explore the cavern to the utmost. To determine his exact direction he examined his pocket compass, but to his annoyance he found that the needle would no longer work with precision, and he was led to believe that large beds of iron ore were in that vicinity. The compass being no longer a safe guide it was necessary to move with caution, lest he lose himself in the vast solitudes and never be able to make his way out to the

upper world. Therefore, critically observing his whereabouts as he proceeded, he moved slowly forward. As he advanced, the light, which he had noticed at first, became more and more brilliant and he had accomplished 4,000 paces (about two miles), when the scene was lit up as by a noon-day sun.

In the meanwhile he noticed many other proofs that this was an ancient forest. Clumps of smaller trees, bushes, vines, etc., were seen in all directions, and he could hardly realize that they were petrifications, so natural and perfect did they appear. The ground (or rather rock), upon which he walked, was nearly level, yet he was greatly annoyed by the broad leaved petrified grass, which ran up like so many sword blades, and rendered his journey not only difficult, but extremely dangerous. The grass upon which the Mammoths, Mastodons, Dinothera and other monsters of old had pastured, would not naturally be of a rank growth in a dense forest like this, yet he noticed many of the stalks were fifteen to twenty feet high.

As he struggled slowly forward through the stony network of vines and tangled grasses, he fortunately came to what seemed to have been a broad and well defined path, on which he found he could travel with comfort and safety, and which in the prehistoric ages had doubtless been the tramping ground of the denizens of the forest. In this path he noticed several footprints, unlike anything he had ever seen before, some of them of a very great size. One of them, especially, was so exceedingly large that he measured it, and found its diameter to be a little over four feet. The steps of this old prehistoric king were about thirty-seven feet apart.

A little further on a very interesting sight met his gaze. Over a clump of small trees or bushes, which did not exceed 125 feet in height, a mass of vines had grown. Upon these he saw vast numbers of berries of a beautiful red color, which, mingled with the dark green of the leaves, presented a very attractive appearance. These berries were from ten inches to two feet in diameter, and the leaves from six to eight feet long, and about half that in width. Very tiny specimens indeed, of the age of gigantic vegetation. So perfect did this charming bower of vines appear, that at first he was almost constrained to believe that here was something

which had escaped the general curse of fossilization. Upon one of the berries which had fallen to the ground, he noticed a petrified worm about twenty inches long, whose depredations on this particular berry had, a million years ago, caused it to fall before its time.

More closely viewing this natural arbor of fruits and vines he saw upon one of the branches, a bird, which in many respects, resembled a gigantic pigeon; round smooth head, short but broad wings, and in color a dark blue, and which in its day was doubtless deemed a beautiful and peaceable songster. Its height was about five feet.

A little way below this bird, was another winged denizen of the forest. Its body was small, not to exceed six feet in length, but it had a head nearly as long and as large as its body. Its powerful jaws, filled with long sharp teeth, gave it a most forbidding aspect. It had four feet and broad membranous wings, from which the professor concluded that this was the terrible and ferocious winged reptile of the Tertiary period, known as the Pterodaetyl, the fossil remains of one of which he had seen in Chicago, and this therefore he readily recognized. This cruel reptile had evidently been laying in wait for the bird over his head with intent to devour it, when the flood sweeping down had destroyed both, and turned them and all their surroundings to imperishable stone.

Having sufficiently viewed these relics of a buried age, the professor passed onward, following the old beaten path as before. He was now about two miles from the place of entrance. As he advanced, he noticed directly before him what he at first supposed to be a lofty mound. He approached it, feeling assured that here was some new wonder, nor was he mistaken. Before him was the monarch of the forest, the same old Mastodon or Dinotherium, whose tracks had hitherto excited his attention. In shape, the monster somewhat resembled an elephant; it was built heavily and clumsily, but instead of two tusks it had four, and its mouth was armed with formidable teeth, from two to three feet long. In length it measured about 90 feet, its breadth 34 feet, and its height when standing must have been not less than 60 feet. Its trunk, 35 feet in length, measured 12 feet in diameter at its base, and tapered gradually to its end.

The tusks were from 18 to 20 feet long. The eyes of this monster, three feet across, seemed to scan their visitor with such an appalling glare, that all his fortitude and philosophy were required to restrain him from turning and fleeing from the fearful presence.

Moving forward, the professor soon found himself upon the bank of a narrow, subterranean river. In the distance, and at a point inaccessible to him, a broad sheet of water fell with a deafening roar from the roof into the river below.

He was here enabled to ascertain the cause of the brilliant illumination of the cavern. High up in the roof and apparently not far from the source of the stream, was a fracture, through which rays of sunlight, reflected from the rocks above, were thrown with great brilliancy upon the waterfall, which thus blazed like a great curtain of fire. How the light could be thrown down such a distance and produce a result of such remarkable brilliancy, he was at a loss to comprehend. Yet of such being the fact, he had optical evidence.

As he was meditating on this and on the other wonders he had that day seen, he noticed that the waterfall was becoming more and more dim, and in a short time the light totally disappeared, leaving him with but his lamp to illuminate the solitude. Looking at his watch, he saw that it was sundown, and being very tired, he camped upon the bank of the river for the night.

At six o'clock the next morning, he noticed a faint light upon the waterfall, indicating the first blush of dawn in the world above. In a short time the light increased, until at 8 o'clock the waterfall gleamed as brightly as the day before. Then he arose, ate breakfast and drank from the river, and pursued his investigations.

Wandering along the bank, he noticed a little thicket a few paces back, through the matted foliage of which he discovered another remarkable petrification. It was a huge animal, resembling a sloth, only vastly larger. Its length was 24 feet and was about 14 feet high. It had a large body and strong legs; its head was round or nearly so, and in its solid jaws were planted a double row of massive teeth. It had four legs, and on its feet were three immensely long and powerful claws or fingers. A broad tail, resembling in shape

an oar blade, but of amazing length, swept the ground for 15 or 20 paces. The appearance of this huge beast indicated that it was not carnivorous, but was designed to make its home among the branches of the trees, the bark and leaves of which furnished it food. The professor concluded, and doubtless correctly, that this was the ancient *Megatherium*, whose gigantic fossil remains are often found in the Tertiary period of the Mamallion age.

A little further, he came to what resembled a turtle. It had an oblong flattish body, was about ten feet long and stood some five or six feet high. It was covered with scales and was equally at home on land or in water. It had eyes of most malignant expression, and teeth which when it lived would have made it a very unpleasant acquaintance.

Pursuing his investigations down the river, the professor next came to where several enormous reptiles had been caught by the flood and all destroyed while in the very act of a desperate battle. He counted three of these formidable carnivorous animals, two of which were plesiosaurs and seemed to have been united in giving battle to the third, an ichthyosaurus of an amazing size. All of them were lizard like in shape, the ichthyosaurus was, however, three or four times as large as the plesiosaurus. The ichthyosaurus was in length about 60 paces, or about 180 feet, and in all its proportions was the most enormous of anything he had yet seen. The jaws of this monster, 60 feet in length, and armed with a fearful array of powerful fangs, would, when expanded, have compassed and crushed within them at one gulp half the buildings of Ponca. In this battle with his more feeble adversaries, he was evidently on the offensive. The necks of the plesiosaurs he held crushed in his jaws, and there, mangled and dying, these reptiles had in their agonies, torn up the earth as by the shock of an earthquake.

From the scene of this fearful conflict, the professor now found another path leading back into the forest. As he resumed his walk he could not forbear reflecting on the littleness and insignificance, not only of mankind but of all things now living, animal and vegetable, when compared with the tremendous creations surrounding him. The tiny flowering plants of the upper earth, were magnified a thousand fold. The insignificant tadpole species, here became



salamandroids, with round bodies six feet in diameter, while in place of the harmless lizard he beheld what he recognized as the magalosaurus and iguanodon, 60 to 90 feet long, and whose powerful tails would at one sweep overthrow the largest trees and rocks of our day.

In an open glade he saw collected a number of enormous beasts and reptiles, the names of which he found no difficulty in determining. Among them, he recognized the dinotherium, an animal whose height was thirty feet, while its body was three times that in length, with a girth of least eighty feet. The ferocious aspect of this monstrosity of nature, the malignant and baleful glare of its eyes, its tusks, sharp as swords and of such an amazing length that sixty feet could be measured between their points, and more than all, the vast strength displayed in its trunk, fifty feet long and thirty feet around it at the base - made a spectacle which would have struck terror to a heart less stout than that of Prof. Perrigoue.

The lifelike appearance of the different petrifications was startling, and could hardly be accounted for by any known laws of nature. The color, the hair, even the expressions of countenance, were so perfect, that one could with difficulty believe that these animals only existed a long series of ages ago.

Near by, the professor also saw the paleotherium, another immensely large and strong beast, the progenitor in remote ages of the hippopotamus and rhinoceros, and even, as is claimed by some, of the tapir and hog, but unlike them in its extraordinary size, being eighteen feet high when standing erect, with a body proportionately large and of a length not less than forty feet. Here, also, were several species of the saurian tribe, and to the left, were a group of horned serpents and winged frogs. One of the latter, measured by the professor, was found to be thirteen and one-half feet high. Pursuing his way, the professor next entered a portion of the forest which seemed to combine the brilliant splendors of the tropics with a grandeur and magnificence, rarely to be seen on the upper earth. On either hand, the towering trees were almost hidden by their luxuriant foliage and the innumerable vines and plants which, creeping upward by a myriad of convolutions, had woven themselves together, and overhead

had formed a perfect arbor. Through this dense growth of vegetation, by some curious freak of nature, opened a wide avenue. As the professor walked along it, he gazed with admiration upon the choice and many colored fruits and flowers on either hand. Amid the variety of fruit he recognized none as belonging to this age, except the grapes, which hung in great abundance and in clusters of such size that a single one would have weighed him down. Slowly he traversed this romantic pathway, drinking in the beauty of the scene, and it was with great difficulty he could realize that all these regal splendors were but the petrifications of existence in the earth's infancy.

After a walk of several miles through these scenes, the professor returned toward the river and at night found himself again on the bank, where he slept on the camping ground of the night before. The next morning he deemed it proper to leave the cavern, his provisions being nearly exhausted, proposing, however, to revisit it again, and bring away, if possible, some of the fossils which there abounded. He therefore retraced his steps, regaining with some difficulty, the crevice in the rocks by which he had descended. From here, after resting himself a short time and making a final survey of the great cavern he was leaving, he started for the outer world. In the passage leading up to the shaft he noticed that the air was becoming very impure. In the lower cavern he had not been troubled by fire damp, but in this upper passage, it seemed exceedingly and dangerously prevalent. As he passed on, he saw that the air inside of the gauze covering to his lamp had taken fire. The safety lamps of coal mines, when properly constructed, can be easily regulated, and if the air takes fire within the lamp, it can be readily extinguished; but in this home-made lamp, Professor P. found it impossible to extinguish the flame. He knew that in a few minutes at least, the protecting wires would become red hot, then melt, and an explosion would occur which would inevitably bring the roof down upon him and bury him alive. With horror, he hurled the lamp from him, and fled as fast as possible. So rapid were his motions that in five minutes at most, he passed from the crevice into the shaft and from thence to the upper world again. As he emerged from the shaft the roar of the explosion greeted

his ears. He immediately examined to ascertain what damage, if any, had been done by the explosion, and he found that though what dirt had been thrown into the shaft could easily be taken out again, the worst calamity resulting had been the settling of the rocks and the closing of the fissure through which he had entered, and possibly throughout its entire length. Greatly disappointed at this disastrous conclusion of his adventures, he came up to town as stated at the commencement of this narration and made report of his discoveries.

### VOLCANIC PHENOMENA.

#### THRILLING ADVENTURES OF A PARTY OF SCIENTISTS WHILE MAKING INVESTIGATION.

The story of Prof. Perrigoué's discoveries a few pages back, and this one about the Ionia volcano, are samples of what old settlers sometimes amused themselves with. They have all been forgotten in late years. As to the volcano, that as well as the pretty village of Ionia, were long ago washed out by the Missouri, and the memory of them alone remains.

In 1876 and 1877 there was much talk and many theories in relation to the phenomena that were seen near Ionia, known as the "volcano." A great many people went there to see it, and returned home no wiser than before. They saw a burning hill which threw off intense heat and suffocating fumes and in the darkness of night glowed like a great bed of fire, but the cause of it was a mystery, and aside from the explanation given by Prof. Aughey, is as much of a mystery now as it was then. It is not likely there was anything about it resembling a volcano, yet some insisted that it was one, and in corroboration, claimed that occasionally sounds could be heard beneath the surface, and that at such times, steam would escape from the crevices, and dirt and even stones be thrown up.

Among those whose curiosity gave them a desire to visit and see the alleged volcano, were three gentlemen from Iowa, Messrs. Vance, Andrews and Brown. They came up to Ponca from Sioux City one afternoon late in the fall of '77, and the next morning employed Mr. Green of the livery

firm of Green & Palen to take them to the scene of mystery. As the gentlemen had with them a number of scientific instruments, such as a compass and chain, several long, diamond-pointed drilling rods, a thermometer, etc., curiosity was considerably aroused as to who they were and the cause of their visit. It was said by some that they were railroad engineers; others maintained they were a party of land hunters, while others on seeing the drilling apparatus, affirmed that the strangers were prospecting for coal. A facetious surmise was, that one of them, a tall, fine looking gentleman with a slightly foreign cast of countenance, was the Brazilian Traveler; that another, a short, energetic man, was Gen. Manager Davenport, of the C. C. & B. H. R. R., and that the intellectual appearance of the third, denoted Prof. Jones of New York. All joking aside, however, the gentlemen really bore the commonplace names above mentioned and were not known to fame by anything remarkable. A natural diffidence about exposing to the public the object of their visit, led them to be reserved and reticent. After a trip which lasted three days the party returned from Ionia and the next morning took the train for Sioux City.

Out of this little expedition to see the Ionia volcano, grew various stories, and the numerous yarns, aided and added to by the imagination of the tellers, made out that the gentlemen in question had made some very important discoveries and in doing so, had passed through many exciting adventures. In due time a few of these stories were collected together and boiled down and their differences harmonized as much as possible and the result was a narrative probably no more improbable than the account which Prof. Perrigone gave of his discoveries of caves and the petrifications of pre-historic animals.

According to the story, Messrs. Vance, Andrews and Brown, accompanied by Mr. Green had visited the volcano and explored it thoroughly, and in doing so had, indeed, passed through some dangerous adventures. The account of their trip thus given was that at noon of the day they started out from Ponca, they arrived at Ionia. Leaving the town to their right, they in a short time reached the rough district in the neighborhood of the volcano, the close proximity

of which was indicated by dense sulphurous fumes prevailing the atmosphere. The horses were now securely tied, and the party proceeded forward on foot. Approaching by means of difficult paths through a wild region, they soon stood on the summit of a lofty bluff, overlooking the river, and from which a wide extent of country was visible. In front rolled the tumultuous Missouri, across whose dirty bosom nature had commenced throwing a bridge of ice. Beyond and about a mile away, were the low lands and dense forests of Dakota. At their right they looked down into the pleasant little valley in which nestled cosily among its shrubbery and trees, the little town of Ionia. On their left and up the river, they beheld a long range of bluffs and broken land as far as the eye could reach.

The wild grandeur of the scene, was, however, disregarded, as they beheld the real object of their search revealing itself by its spires of smoke, just below and immediately in front of them. Hastily scrambling down the almost perpendicular sides of the bluff, the party stood on the spot so well known as the Ionia volcano. Imagine an oblong tract containing perhaps ten acres, whose myriads of funnel shaped mouths continually emitted a murky cloud. As they went forward over the plateau, the heat was intense. Beneath their feet sparkled beds of coals, and the air laden with noxious vapors, was almost overpowering. The phenomena seemed more wonderful as night came on. What in the daylight appeared as jets of vapor, resembling smoke, were now of a bright bluish color, and as their columns ascended were variegated with brilliant flashes. It was noticed that this luminous vapor did not discharge itself uniformly, but would continue only from four to six minutes, then cease for a short interval and then commence again. It was also noticed that the discharges of vapor from the numerous orifices all occurred at the same time, thus indicating by their concert of action that their streams were all from one common reservoir. Just previous to an irruption, a low rumbling sound would be heard, accompanied by a slight trembling of the earth. All these various phenomena would in the light and noise of day hardly be noticed, but now were clearly apparent.

Mr. Vance stated that during his travels in South Amer-

ica and especially in Europe he had visited several volcanoes and had studied them considerably, and he was compelled to acknowledge that this, though on a small scale, bore a striking resemblance to them. The discharges at regular intervals, the jarring of the earth and the dull sound which anticipated the eruptions, were a counterpart of the phenomena he had witnessed at Vesuvius and *Ætna*.

For the purpose of more fully testing the question whether these eruptions were occasioned by volcanic action, the party now proposed to drill down through the earth and rock, which was an easy matter as the rock, owing to the extreme heat, seemed to be softened to the consistency of dry clay.

Taking their hollow diamond pointed iron rods, they selected a spot near to one of the largest jets of vapor, and were enabled to drill downward very rapidly. In the course of three hours they penetrated to a depth of about sixty feet. The drawing of the rods occupied some time as they were white hot, and it was near midnight when the last joint was taken out. Then a heavy explosion took place, accompanied by a tremendous discharge, not of luminous vapor alone, but of what appeared to be a stream of liquid fire, which thrown to a height of at least 75 feet, fell like a cataract of flame. The display lasted a little less than five minutes, then ceased, and after this first grand exhibition of earth's fireworks, the eruptions were merely of luminous vapor, the same as was emitted by the thousand little volcanic mouths around them.

This wonderful discharge of fire was accompanied by a number of red hot stones; some of them, indeed, were melted by the violent heat. It was afterwards ascertained that this brilliant display was witnessed by several persons about ten miles distant in Dakota, who supposed that an enormous meteor was rising above the horizon. Mr. Vance, by this experiment, was more than ever convinced that this was a veritable volcano, and he assured his companions that the great source or fountain of fire was but a little way beneath them.

It now being early morning, the party went back to their carriage and rested until daylight, when they again returned to the volcanic field. The displays of the night

had passed with the darkness, and only a few spindles of vapor were visible, and a stranger might pass over without discerning anything unusual. He would find his mistake, however, if he attempted to walk with bare feet. The most sedate personage in such predicament, would undoubtedly perform a hornpipe in a very undignified manner. The morning light revealed several other interesting facts which had hitherto escaped attention. Though the weather was cold, and as a general thing vegetation had been dead for two months past, it was noticed that in several ravines adjacent to the volcanic field, the grass was green and luxuriant. Some of it was six inches high, and evidently growing in a good, healthy condition. Mr. Andrews clipped some to take east to show his friends what Nebraska could do in the winter time. Mr. Green also took occasion to cut off a quantity of it for his steeds, to whom it was a luxurious repast.

The earthquake, which a few weeks before, had been severely felt in Dixon county, was referred to in the conversation respecting the volcano, and inquiry was made of Mr. Vance, who seemed to have a very complete knowledge of such matters, as to whether in his opinion such earthquake was in any manner connected with the phenomena they were witnessing. The reply of Mr. Vance gave a new and startling theory. "Here," said he, "is an undoubted volcano. Below the surface, (nor is it far below, as we saw last night), is a reservoir of fire, doubtless communicating with the internal fire of the earth. Near by flows the Missouri. My opinion is that the earthquake was occasioned by the river breaking through into the fiery caldron beneath us. If, for example, you were to turn a stream of water into a crucible of melted iron or any other mineral substance, a violent commotion would immediately occur, and if the stream was large an explosion would take place. The first will illustrate an earthquake, the second a volcano."

To illustrate the truth of his theory, Mr. Vance poured some water into the hole that had been drilled the night before. Instantly they were saluted by an explosion and a shower of stones. "Had this," said he "instead of a quart of water, been one-tenth part of what flows by this point in an hour, we would have had an earthquake like the

one occasioned a few weeks ago. Finally, as the river continues to encroach, a great breach will be made in the dividing walls and an immense flood will rush in upon the molten mass below. Then the spot where we stand, and perhaps some space around will be tossed toward the clouds, stones and lava hurled out, and a full-blown volcano inaugurated. When the overflow of lava into the river blocks up the underground channel and thus shuts off the irritating cause of the commotion, the volcano will die away to a mere smoke pot as it is called, until other changes cause the river to break through again. If it were possible to discover this underground channel, one might regulate the earthquake and volcanic display at pleasure. Such was Mr. Vance's theory.

The party deemed it now proper to further investigate the bluffs in the neighborhood. As they wandered along they noticed in the ledges of the rocks many curious formations and petrifications. The whole day was thus occupied in viewing these interesting subjects of study. Evening came as they were resting at the foot of a rocky eminence, preparatory to returning to the volcano which was about a mile away.

Suddenly to their unutterable amazement, they distinctly heard a distant musical sound, which continued a long time, then died away, and then commenced again. It was faint, and as they heard it, seemed unearthly, yet it was unmistakably military music. From whence it came they had not the slightest idea, but it seemed to issue from a crevice at the base of the rock. This astonishing phenomenon was worthy of immediate investigation. The crevice which poured forth these sounds was about six inches in width. With pick and bar the party proposed to drift their way into the interior and discover if possible the cause of such a new and unheard of mystery.

The opening from which the sounds emanated, seemed to be an irregular fracture or break in the rocks, which extended perpendicularly some distance and which near the base of the ledge was six or eight inches in width. A few blows of the pick upon the soft rock soon enlarged the crevice considerably, and it was seen that that the opening rapidly



widened as it extended into the bluff. Having prepared their lamps, the party made their way into the interior, Mr. Vance taking the lead.

They found themselves in a ragged and rapidly widening seam, the direction of which from the entrance was southeasterly, and which was simply one of the innumerable network of fissures and seams which intersect the bluffs along the river.

The party scrambled along the rough pathway for 60 to 70 feet, when the passage, which had hitherto had been growing wider, suddenly contracted, so much so, indeed, that it was with the utmost difficulty that they were enabled to proceed at all.

At intervals they heard the same musical sounds which had startled them at the outset.

About fifty feet farther on, the party found the fissure intersected nearly at right angles by a still narrower crevice. From this new break in the rock, which was not over two inches in width, they found proceeding the subterranean melody, which they now heard with much greater distinctness than before.

So distinct, indeed, were the sounds, that the tones of the different instruments were clearly distinguished. Mr. Green, on listening intently, stated that the different melodies were those usually played by the Ponca band.

Yet it could not be possible, the distance, 12 miles, utterly precluding such a conclusion. Mr. Green also now called to mind that this was the evening which had been selected by the band for practice.

"If such is the case," said Mr. Vance, "this musical phenomena can be explained. As in all volcanic countries, this region is permeated by an infinite number of breaks or fissures. These fissures are so many pneumatic tubes, through which, sounds may be conveyed to a great distance. Experiments have demonstrated that even so low a sound as a whisper may be heard miles away. If, therefore, this band is playing near some opening, as for instance a well, which is intersected by this natural system of pneumatic tubes underlying Dixon county, we need seek no further for the solution of this apparent mystery."

The party listened for some time, and until the distant

music died away and finally ceased altogether. Even though they could readily account for it, yet such sounds in that rocky retreat were peculiarly interesting. The explanation which Mr. Vance had given as to the cause, was now verified by the sound of a distant bell, which was instantly recognized by Mr. Green as belonging to Ponca, and whose sounds, he stated, he could not mistake. This bell, evidently ringing for nine o'clock, reverberated through the rocky fissures in a weird and unearthly manner.

The party now proceeded on, intending to explore to the end of the passage, which by reason of the rapidly closing walls seemed not far off. As they moved forward they noted the different formations of the rocks, and perceived occasionally, thin veins of coal, from six to ten inches thick, embedded in layers of the finest slatestone. In one spot they saw a vast accumulation of copperas; at another place a species of yellow clay which Mr. Vance stated would, if properly mixed with oil, make a most valuable mineral paint. But what was still more wonderful, they found in many spots great numbers of shells, thus indicating that life had once existed where the solid rock now stood. Thus examining these interesting discoveries, the party slowly continued to advance until they had penetrated to the distance of not less than 150 feet.

The passage had now become so extremely narrow that the explorers found very great difficulty in crowding themselves forward. In addition to this inconvenience they found at this place, the way partially blocked up by a large rock which had fallen from overhead. Beyond they saw by throwing forward the light of their lamps, a much larger opening in the rocks. With the aid of a pick they set to work to break away a portion of the intervening rock, and with so much success that in a short time they were able to crawl past it. In their eagerness to get forward they did not notice as they loosened the boulder, that the rocky walls enclosing them trembled, nor did they realize their danger until it was too late. This keystone, as it may have been called, torn away, the walls closed with a crash, and only because they had hastily scrambled through into the wider passage beyond, were they saved from being crushed by the rocky jaws.

One can hardly imagine a more unfortunate situation than that in which these adventurous gentlemen now found themselves. The seam or fissure thus far followed, had closed up behind them, and they were buried, as it appeared, beneath 150 feet of rock.

The passage, wherein they were so fatally imprisoned, was somewhat wider than the one they had traversed, but its length they found to be a few paces only. Thus trapped, they gloomily contemplated the dungeon surrounding them.

What was to be done? If anything could be accomplished to escape from their rocky tomb, it must be done without delay. Even now, one of their lamps was going out and the other would last but a short time longer.

Mr. Andrews seized the pick and wildly endeavored to break his way back through the rock. A few blows showed how utterly foolish and unavailing was the attempt.

Mr. Green, whose presence of mind under these appalling circumstances was remarkable, suggested that probably they would be searched for, their place of entrance discovered, and if so, strenuous exertions would be made to break in, to their relief.

But such a cheerful termination to their adventure could not, on reflection, be entertained. Mr. Vance stated that from his examination of the slope of the rocks as they passed through, he felt sure that the closing of the crevice had extended to the surface, and that the exterior opening as well, was so closed as to be visible only as a narrow seam. He reasoned that there was no ground to hope for a discovery of their situation by outside parties, and that even were it possible to break their way back to the pneumatic tube and through that give information to their friends of their whereabouts, several months of hard labor would necessarily be required to re-open the passage through the rock to them.

Mr. Green proposed as their retreat was cut off, they should examine and see if there were not some other outlet to the cavern.

Messrs. Green and Andrews went along the walls, examining them critically. At the farthest extremity, blows on the rock revealed by the hollow sound an opening beyond.

It seemed that this part of the passage had been blocked up by some loose pieces of slate rock, the removal of which

showed the continuation of the way into the bluff.

"Going in does not seem like getting out," said Mr. Vance grimly, "still we will move in that direction, rather than give up in despair."

The passage they continued to be the counterpart of that they had already traversed. But the rough walls, veined with irregular layers of coal, slate stone and an occasional deposit of clay and shells, no longer received the geological attention of Mr. Vance. He and his companions were too deeply engaged in meditating on the problem of escape to the outer world, to regard the surroundings with scientific interest. Had the rock inclosing them been pure gold they would gladly have exchanged it for a safe deliverance from their situation.

Thus, slowly and despairingly they moved forward, a hundred or more yards. The walls, hitherto nearly parallel, now contracted rapidly, and soon the fissure became so narrow that they dragged themselves along with difficulty, and were in imminent danger of suffocation. The imprisoned gentlemen were about to abandon all further exertion, and yield themselves to the fate which seemed inevitable, when suddenly the walls expanded into a wide and magnificent cavern. The roof was lofty, and from it, descending to the floor, were seen immense stalactites, whose covering of quartz blazed in the light of the lamp like mirrors of silver.

A grand sight, truly, and one which under other circumstances would have delighted the eye of the geologist. But in their unfortunate condition, the brilliant splendors which surrounded them were scarcely noticed, and the sad procession of adventurers pressed wearily forward.

Traversing the length of the dazzling subterranean hall, the party found and entered at its eastern extremity another crevice or irregular seam in the rocks, the course of which seemed to bear nearly to the northeast.

They now for the first time heard at regular intervals, the low, throbbing sound of the volcano, which, therefore they concluded was not far off. As they advanced the sounds became more and more distinct, and the poisonous fumes of sulphurous vapor, at first hardly discernable, soon by their growing intensity, warned them of their approach

toward the abyss underlying the volcanic field. Ere long, far in the distance, through the dense vapors in front, they caught glimpses of a lurid sea, a chaos of flame and smoke, the intense heat and suffocating fumes of which utterly precluded further advance in that direction. There seemed, then, to be no other alternative but to retrace their way. Yet, where could they go? Was it possible to find an escape from these labyrinths? As they revolved in their minds these important questions, they saw in a little hollow in the rock a small quantity of water. Perishing with thirst this fortunate discovery was most welcome. Mr. Vance noticed that to the right of the pool, and running northerly, was a narrow opening, the sides and floor of which were smoothed as by the action of water. By his advice the party changed their course into this new passage, which, unlike the irregular fissures they had previously followed, was an easy pathway to their feet.

As they advanced they observed that pools of water in their path became more numerous and finally covered it altogether, thus presenting before them a channel, which, as they found, grew deeper at every step.

Hence it seemed that their retreat in this direction was also to be cut off. But the general despair at the new danger which menaced them, was not shared by Mr. Vance. On the contrary, for the first time since their incarceration he seemed encouraged and hopeful.

"It appears evident," said he, "that we have struck the subterranean channel leading from the Missouri to the volcanic matter. Through this channel, when the river is high, water will find its way to the abyss of fire, and other conditions being favorable, an earthquake, or even an eruptive volcano will be the result. The surface of the water before us shows the height of the river. Hence, let us go forward. When we can walk no farther we will swim. It is our only hope."

With these words he took the lead along the fast deepening channel. Soon the water came up to their necks, and the lamp becoming extinguished, they were left in impenetrable darkness. While in this fearful predicament, the party ascertained that the roof of the cavern was gradually

sloping downward as they proceeded, and was now within a short distance of the surface of the water, and must soon sink beneath it.

The danger which this new discovery foreshadowed, and which in their despair seemed the natural culmination of the night's disastrous experiences, was forgotten as a shout from Mr. Vance directed their attention to what appeared to be a faint point of light, some distance in front of them.

As they swam toward it they became conscious that the roof of the passage was descending more and more, until finally, between it and the surface of the water, intervened scarcely a hand's breadth of space, through which, however, the light now gleamed brilliantly like a star of hope. A moment more and they emerged from their watery prison which here opened into the river. Fortunately the ice had not yet formed at this point and they experienced no further trouble in this most remarkable escape. As they came out they found it was broad day so they had been all night wandering in the subterranean solitudes.

The joy of the adventurers at once more standing on the upper earth, knew no bounds. Warming themselves by the heat of the volcano, they hastened to where the horses were tied and started for Ponca, where they arrived that evening. The next day Mr. Vance and his friends departed for the east.

## INDIAN SCARE AND MASSACRE.

STORY OF THE PERILOUS DAYS WHEN DIXON COUNTY WAS ON  
THE FRONTIER.

[The following story—written by one of our family—was published several years ago in an Omaha paper. The story is founded on the great scare of 1862, and the murder of the Wiseman family, both of which have already been described in these pages, and which took place about a year apart, but for the purposes of this story are represented as occurring at the same time. As to the flight of settlers from Niobrara and the expedition from Ponca to that place in search of Indians, the story is nearly historically correct, and for that reason is here inserted, but the part relating to the murder of the Wiseman's is a long way off, and is not one-tenth as terrible as were the actual facts.]

Dixon county was first settled about thirty-five years ago, previous to which time, with the exception of an occasional white man who ventured here to trade or hunt, the Indians were the sole occupants. The first white men who saw this country were Lewis and Clark, when they passed up the Missouri river in 1804 on their expedition to the Pacific coast.

Indian legends inform us that in very early days a large Indian village was located near where Ponca now stands, another one at Ionia, and still other important Indian towns at Martinsburg and Dailey. In these various villages resided portions of the Omahas, the Dakotas and the Poncas, the latter being the predominating tribe in this part of the country. These different bands were frequently engaged in quarrels with each other, which often led to bloody conflicts. One desperate battle which took place about a mile north of Ponca, near the river, between a large number of Omaha and Ponca warriors, resulted in a great slaughter of the former. The Omahas had come down from the Dailey country, where their town was located, on a raid, and were ambushed and nearly every one slain.

However, these desperate encounters between different bands occurred many years before the country was inhabited by whites. It was in 1856 when the first adventurous spirits located here, at which period the Indians in the vicinity, in numbers or hostility, were not generally dangerous neighbors. They would steal horses, but unless they had increased their courage and animosity by a supply of firewater, they never showed a desire to practice on the whites any of those hairlifting ceremonies which, among themselves, they had previously been accustomed to engage in. Still, for several years, it was not deemed entirely safe to be far away from home without a gun.

Although those few primitive settlers experienced many hardships and discouragements nothing of a startling character occurred until 1862. It was on October 14 of that year when Ponca, then a village of perhaps forty people, was suddenly turned into a state of wild excitement and her usually quiet streets were filled with terrified men, women and children.

The country between Ponca and Niobrara in 1862 was very sparsely settled. Only at great distances apart could the homesteaders' cabins be seen, and only now and then could be found the soil turned over for cultivation. Those who had drifted from the east and located in this part of the country were forced to confront the usual disadvantages of pioneer existence, and many obstacles fell in their paths to thwart their hopes and intentions. This was the year in which the Indian outbreak took place in Minnesota and Dakota, thus creating general discontent among the Indian tribes. Each night during this threatening period the families in their lonely cabins knew it was possible that before the dawn of the following morning they would be tomahawked and scalped and their homes reduced to ashes. Their fears increased as the days went by, but, unwilling to abandon all their worldly possessions, they remained, only hoping for the arrival of the time when the savages would be quelled and peace and safety restored.

In October of the year in question, a friendly Winnebago half-breed Indian passed through the settlements between Ponca and Niobrara, scattering the report that an immense number of Sioux warriors were approaching, bringing



great destruction to lives and property, burning houses and massacring the inmates. So terrible a story of imminent danger carried dismay into every household and caused the strongest hearts to quail. On receipt of this awe inspiring tale the question arose in the homesteader's mind as to what course should be pursued to best secure protection against the approaching danger.

In Ponca, on the October day above mentioned, about 5 o'clock in the afternoon, Mr. M. Q. DeAgley, the only merchant of the town, was in the act of closing his place of business for the day, when he heard the din of wagon wheels and the tramp of horses, and in the course of a few moments a long train of wagons, one after another, appeared, coming over the hills which skirt the town on the west. Mr. DeAgley, knowing of the Indian outbreak, although it was at a considerable distance, was stricken by the fear that the moving wagons were those of the red men and that they were stored with the plunder reaped from the rural settlers, and that in ambushade lay the warriors waiting for darkness to come, when Ponca should be spoliated, her inhabitants scalped and her few rude dwellings and business houses swept away in smoke. Mr. DeAgley went forthwith to state his fears to his neighbors, and to assist them in preparations for defense against the danger which seemed to be pending. But before he could make the rounds, the streets were thronged by wagons occupied, not by Indians, but by homesteaders who had been impelled to make an exodus for the east by the report that the Sioux savages were marching on Niobrara, and were designing to wipe out that place, as well as all the white settlements between there and Sioux City.

It seems that a man named E. G. Smith, who lived about eight miles south of Niobrara, was the first recipient of the exciting news, and without hesitation, he gathered into his wagon his family, together with all the provisions, grain and household goods that he could conveniently carry, and immediately started out in an eastern direction. The dwellers in the first cabin which he reached on his journey very willingly adopted his plan, and also loaded their wagons with portions of their scanty wealth and followed on his eastern exodus. In brief, each pioneer along the road did the same.

until, when the company entered Ponca, it consisted of about sixty teams and 200 persons.

The good people of this town, loth to see the desertion of such a rich territory, encouraged the settlers to halt at this point and consider what, under the circumstances, would be best to do. A public meeting was held that evening to consider the matter. It was an exciting gathering. Many speeches were made, some maintaining that if they remained in this country their lives would be in peril, while others held that the story might be exaggerated and would bear investigation.

After a careful and thorough discussion of the question it was concluded to organize a corps of horsemen who would leave the next morning and examine the territory between Ponca and Niobrara. Those who could best leave their families were chosen to make up this company of scouts which embraced about sixty hale and vigorous young horsemen, some from Ponca, though the majority were of those who had fled from the Niobrara country. The visitors were provided with quarters for the night, barns and cellars being converted into places of lodging. Everybody arose early the next morning to prepare for the departure of the military force. However, the arrangements were not very extensive, consisting mainly in obtaining a sufficient number of guns and horses.

About 8 o'clock a. m., they assembled and after electing A. L. Merser as commander of the expedition, and after an exchange of parting words with their relatives and friends, the gallant company rode away. Through a wild country, and one especially gloomy on their route through the forest along the Missouri, the company pursued its course toward Niobrara. At any moment the men, knowing the Indian style of warfare, would not have been surprised to see the enemy spring from some ravine or dense thicket of timber and attack them. The commander kept strict watch over the surrounding country, and directed his forces to be prepared for battle on an instant's notice.

As they came at long intervals to the deserted cabins of settlers no sign of life was visible, but as yet no injury had been dealt out to them. By noon a distance of twenty miles had been covered and a halt was made on one of the Lime

Creek hills, near the county line between Dixon and Cedar counties, for rest and refreshment. The fact that not an Indian had so far been seen gave encouragement to the scouts, especially to those of them who had only the day before fled from their homes. After a half hour spent in eating and rest, the march was resumed. For three hours they rode along undisturbed, nothing of note developing until within a short distance of St. James, a little town about thirty miles northwest of Ponca. At this point, about four miles east from St. James, their attention was attracted to a large rock, a short distance north of the road. Partly hidden by the vines which festooned the rock, they saw a little girl, probably 12 years old. She was apparently in great distress, and on near approach it was seen she was covered with blood. When she saw the scouts, she called to them, and ran, as fast as her wounded condition would permit, to claim their protection.

This great rock, where the girl had concealed herself, is familiar to all settlers in that part of the country. At that date it was of significant meaning to the superstitious Indians. Like Spirit Mound, directly across the river from this point, this rock was believed to be haunted by malignant and life-destroying spirits and that certain death would be the portion meted out to the venturesome Indian who approached it.

The soldiers found the girl to be suffering from a painful wound inflicted by an arrow which had penetrated her left arm. Between sobs she told a mournful story. It was gleaned that her name was Mary Wiseman and that she, together with her mother and two brothers, lived in a little log cabin some distance off the road, her father having several months previous joined the United States army. About 3 o'clock on that afternoon Mrs. Wiseman went to St. James to purchase groceries, leaving her three children, Charley and Henry, aged 10 and 16 years respectively, and Mary at home. While the mother was absent, four big Sioux Indians came to the door and demanded admission. The door was locked and barred, but it was soon beaten down, and the savages entered to perpetrate their inhuman designs. Henry, the older boy, had in the meantime secured a gun and made a defense as best he could. But his head was soon pierced by a bullet, and his heroic efforts in

behalf of their home were suddenly ended by death. After murdering Henry, Charley became the next victim. In the meanwhile Mary escaped through the door, and, putting forth her utmost speed, fled. Fortunately for her, and almost providentially it would seem, her steps were directed toward the rock, where she was afterwards found by the soldiers. She was pursued some distance and received an arrow in the arm, but the superstitious fears of the Indians would not permit them to approach too near the haunted rock.

After hearing her story, Mary was accompanied by the soldiers to her home which was found to be in the timber near the river and nearly a mile from the road. By the time they arrived there, the Indians had gone. The scouts found the house plundered, Henry lying dead in a pool of blood and the grief stricken mother, just returned from St. James, bending over Charley, who had been stabbed in the breast and who though unable to speak, was yet alive. There was no hope for him, however, as he was mortally wounded, and in a few minutes his life and sufferings were ended. It was decided to convey the family to St. James and it was done, although considerable time was spent in effecting the necessary preparations for removal, and it was near 8 o'clock in the evening when they reached that place.

The hospitable people there tendered every assistance in this time of great need. The remains of the two boys were placed in one of the dwellings to await burial, and Mrs. Wiseman and her little girl were comfortably provided for, the wounded arm was attended to and everything was done to console them in their distress and bereavement.

At St. James the company of men remained during the night. The people manifested great joy in seeing them, and were very solicitous in providing for their wants. Some of the inhabitants had deserted the town, but several families were still there, probably either being unable to get away or considering the circulated rumors not well founded. The next morning the little army resumed its road toward Niobrara. It would have gained several new recruits at St. James, but the known presence of the Indians in the timber near by, made it necessary that they should remain for home protection. During this day, their second day from Ponca, they traveled thirty-five miles to the little town of Frank-

fort. Throughout the journey the same dilligent watch was kept for the enemy, but not an Indian came into view.

Frankfort had been totally abandoned, and as the soldiers entered the town they were received, not with gorgeous pomp, but by a number of unostentations chickens, which assembled from fences and barn tops, and which, wrestling with hunger, were much pleased to welcome the visitors. In the unpeopled houses they established quarters for the night. They had become extremely fatigued by their two days' experience, the journey had been very irksome, few having saddles and many being wholly unaccustomed to horseback riding.

They arose early the next morning to find, not the fine weather which had previously prevailed, but a sky heavy with clouds and a drizzling rain. Here the army tarried until 10 o'clock, when the clouds dispersed and the sun once more gave out its genial rays. The air after the shower was exhilarating and the trip was continued with renewed vigor. The rain had laid the smoke which before filled the sky and darkened the surrounding landscape. Burnt tracts over in Dakota could be seen, and it was evident that the smoke, which had proven so great an alarm, had emanated from prairie fires. As they pressed on through the solitude and saw the broad and fertile valleys awaiting only the hand of civilization to convert them into luxuriant fields of cereals and vegetables they grew more ardent and determined in carrying out the purpose of their expedition. At 7 o'clock in the evening the company arrived at Niobrara, located on the Missouri river, about twenty-five miles from Frankfort. Niobrara, previously a noted and vigorous frontier town, now, from the quiet which everywhere reigned, seemed almost deserted. It was at first concluded that this place also had been forsaken, but a light glimmering through a window proved the contrary. The travelers followed the light and soon reached the building, which was of considerable size in proportion to the town.

Although the inmates were startled by the unexpected appearance of the scouts, their presence was, as would be supposed, very welcome. At Niobrara, it seems the scare was equally severe. Those who had not left the town were collected in this building, where they hoped to make an effec-

tual defense should the Indians come. Supper was gladly served to the soldier guests and everything done to secure their comfort.

The territory had been carefully examined and nothing appeared to indicate any danger. It was thought these four savages, who had committed the fiendish crime at St. James, were the only hostile Indians in this part of the country and were the sole incentives of the entire Indian scare. Hence the party concluded that further investigation was unnecessary and decided to return to Ponca. So, after a few days of much needed rest, the return march began.

At St. James, Dr. P. A. Glen, who was a member of the expedition, stopped to look after the interests of Mrs. Wiseman and her child and to give them a sum of money which the generous hearted members of the company had contributed to assist them in their troubles. The four renegade Indians had not been again seen, nor, indeed, were they ever afterwards seen on this side of the Missouri. In Ponca, the suspense of the women and children, and the few men who were unable to undertake the hazardous trip, was painful to bear. Imagination pictured their friends and relatives under the knives of the remorseless savages, and all were wrapped in gloom and despondency until the safe return of the pioneers turned their forebodings to joy. In a few days those who had fled to Ponca from their homes returned to them, thankful to know their property was not devastated and that the lives of themselves and families were secure from danger.

## INCIDENTS OF EVERY DAY LIFE.

A SURVEYING EXPEDITION AND THE TRIUMPH OF  
GOOD LUCK.

Not long after becoming a resident of Nebraska, I had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of the recently elected county surveyor, Mr. Sullenberger. Mr. S. was the genial captain of a saw mill near the river, and his long experience among the machinery of the mill, was to his enthusiastic constituents, a sufficient assurance that he was fully capable of managing and boxing around such a little thing as a surveyor's compass.

Hardly was Mr. Sullenberger's election, as well as his somewhat prolonged celebration of so important an event, safely over, when he enjoyed his first experience as a practical surveyor. A Mr. Martin, who lived about twenty miles or so out on the prairie, near the Cedar county line, wanted to find the exact centre of one of his quarter sections of land for the purpose of locating at that point a school house. He therefore notified surveyor Sullenberger, who agreed to be on hand the next day and do the work. As this was to be his first effort as a surveyor he invited the writer to accompany him as assistant. He also, with some appearance of nervousness, inquired if I had ever had any experience as a surveyor, and was cheered with the assurance that I had often ran lines, though I deemed it unnecessary to state that the only lines I ever ran were clothes lines, which, often on blue Mondays, a combination of circumstances had required to be stretched from pole to pole.

Accordingly, the next morning we made ready for the expedition. Deeming that no surveyors, however well versed, could expect to correctly bombard their way from the circumference to the center of a quarter section without instru-

ments, we first drove to the house of Mr. Haydon, the former surveyor, to borrow the necessary utensils of him. Mr. H. cheerfully complied with the request. He brought out a brass bound, shallow, three legged dish, in which swam like a fish, a long and slender finger resembling the hour hand of a clock. "This," said Mr. Haydon, "is the compass." Then he gave us further instructions—he spoke of verniers, of degrees, of sights and of water levels, all which were duly appreciated. He said the vernier should be so regulated that the needle (by which we supposed he referred to the aforesaid fish), would point twelve degrees away from where it ought to point. It appeared from his remarks that it is the rule among surveyors to make such a variation on account of the earth having at some time or other flopped its north pole away twelve degrees from the locality to which the head of said fish had been accustomed to point, hence the twelve degrees were to make allowance, as it were, for the perversity of the earth and the stubbornness of the fish aforesaid.

Having thus been duly instructed, we took the compass and a chain to measure with, and started on our road to Mr. Martin's place, where we arrived at noon. We were welcomed by Mr. Martin and his family with hospitality, our tired horses were fed and we were furnished a dinner fit for a king. After dinner, Mr. Martin showed us around his farm, pointed out his numerous improvements and his big herd of cattle.

But the time had now arrived when it became necessary to forego further pleasure, and come down to business. Mr. Martin was anxious to have the centre of his section of land found and located, and Mr. Sullenberger had come for that purpose; it was therefore high time we were about it, as it was getting late.

As we went to get the compass, Mr. Sullenberger said he would say strictly in confidence that his experience as a surveyor was not very extensive and the only feat he ever performed in that branch was when he once assisted to run a line of half a mile, during which he made a variation of about 300 yards. "So small a discrepancy, is, to be sure, hardly worth minding," said Mr. S., "yet probably you had better attend to the compass and I will boss the chain."



It now became my turn to confess in like confidential manner that I was also not heavily burdened by carrying around what I knew about surveying, and that sooner than use the compass, I would attempt to run the lines by walking across the field blindfolded.

So here we were in a fix. Mr. Martin a little distance off waited expectantly and confidently. But though dismayed for a moment at this mutual revelation, we rose in our misfortunes, equal to the occasion. "I will manage the compass," said Mr. S., and with the dignified gravity of an old government surveyor general, he took it out of the buggy, and mounting it upon its three legs, shouldered it and started for the field of action.

Arriving on the ground, Mr. Martin pointed out the place where he desired us to start from. He wished a line to be run a mile long, when, if correctly done, it would intersect the mound on the other side of the section.

We now proceeded to the task, and this scene is particularly described as it will be instructive to other surveyors. The three-legged instrument having been duly boxed and shook up, so as to make its internal organization work freely, was planted over the desired spot. A thunder storm now appeared and we hastened to make what speed we could in the performance. But there seemed to be many discouragements. The compass wouldn't stay level, and the needle twirled and wiggled around and pointed in all directions except the right one.

"The fluctuations of the needle," said Mr. S., "or to speak in plainer language, its wabbling and spinning on its pivot like an impaled June bug, are often occasioned by the approach of thunder storms as in this instance, at which times streams of electricity break up through the earth and come ripping and tearing out of the ground, thereby disarranging the motions of all such instruments. Nearness to lava or iron ore also produces the same result. Thus; as you may be aware, I formerly resided at Ionia, and indeed, as you may say, under the shadow of the volcano at that place. Now in that country the slugs of iron and lava which volcanic action has slung out and scattered around, effectually preclude the use of the ordinary compass in the ordinary way. The needle scurries around like a bean in a hot

skillet, and the only proper method by which to manage it is to take it out altogether and let it play and kick around awhile on the grass, until it gets the electricity out of it. If you attempt to work it otherwise, you might have to chain it down."

Thus enlivened by scientific discourse, we prepared for the final onslaught. We had been instructed by Mr. Heydon to make an allowance of 12 degrees; on which side however, we had forgotten, but we were greatly assisted in determining, by observing a neighboring corn field, whose rows were said to run north and south. At last, everything being ready, Mr. S. took a long squint over the compass, and gave a military order for the chainmen and flagman to shoot out. So, out we shot, Mr. Martin as flagman, leading the way with his handkerchief tied to a pole, and the rest of us following with the chain, with which we diligently proceeded to measure off the ground.

It is critical business measuring land, especially if the line runs across ravines, through brush and over hills. Sometimes one forgets to count the chains, and at other times in the excitement of tumbling into a ditch one may count rather faster than the law requires.

When we had proceeded forward some distance, the individuals officiating at the two ends, compared notes to see how they agreed. They simply varied in their figures, eleven chains, and in order to settle the difficulty without hard feelings, they split the difference and moved on again. Half way across, with all these precautions, the spot at the centre of the section should be found for the location of the school house. Mr. Martin had previously piled a quantity of brick as near to such centre as he could ascertain by pacing. This pile of brick was a great comfort and materially assisted in the labors of the day.

A few rods west of the brick, the central point was announced and a stake driven down. Then Mr. Martin wanted us to continue our journey in the same line so as to hit the mound on the western side, and thereby prove the truth of our survey. This we deemed unnecessary, but still we did it. We concluded that we could not come out over five hundred yards away from the mound—at all events we were reasonably confident that we should not get off the section

altogether. But for a wonder, (occasioned doubtless by a special interposition of Providence), we hit the mound fair and square, and the center of the section was therefore as correctly demonstrated as though a whole congress of surveyors had determined it. "I see," said Mr. S. with scientific severity, "that we have missed the mark by about one inch. Still, in view of the thunder storm, and coming the distance of a mile, perhaps that slight variation may be excusable."

Having thus overcome all the difficulties which beset us, we wended our way back to the house and started for home.

AN OLD FRONTIERSMAN RELATES THE THRILLING  
EXPERIENCE OF HIS DAUGHTER WITH A  
DROVE OF WILD BEASTS.

Twenty-five years ago the bluffs and ravines along the Missouri were the well populated homes of bears and timber wolves, and were therefore rich fields for the hunter. It was on account of such large game that Messrs. Wheeler and Barnes of Ponca went up one summer day to hunt in the Walnut creek ravine, a few miles above Ionia. They entered the ravine about nine o'clock in the morning, well prepared with guns and ammunition, and made their way along the gloomy defile through an almost impenetrable chaparral. As they advanced they frightened the timid ground squirrel and chipmuck, startled the fierce prairie dog and sharp-toothed muskrat, and by their warlike appearance even caused the pugnacious coon to hie away to his lair. In that sad and sombre retreat, rendered still more so by the unwonted appearance of armed and intruding hunters, the jack rabbit silently and pensively skipped to his den, the soft and dulcet notes of the boogum and the bombajar were hushed, the rattlesnake forgot to shake his musical tail, and the mosquitoes bit with fear and with less venom than of yore.

At noon the hunters reached the head of the ravine. They had killed nothing so far, being determined to reserve their fire for larger animals than any they had seen. As they emerged from the ravine they were pleasantly surprised to see near by, the house of an old frontiersman. They found him at home and expressed to him their ambition to kill something beyond mere chip-squirrels or jack-rabbits, and asked to be directed to the haunts of more worthy game. As they told of their hunting aspirations and desires it was noticed that the old frontiersman partially closed one eye, and with the other took a long and searching survey of his visitors. Then he glanced at the beautiful green of the

trees and then again looked at the hunters as though the contrast between them and the foliage was presenting to his mind the solution of philosophical question. Then he replied to their inquiries.

He told them that bears, wolves and wild-cats were frequent, and that buffaloes were occasionally seen, although he thought the latter were becoming more rare, and that in forty or fifty years they would not be found in the neighborhood, excepting, perhaps, on the Lime creek hills. He told the hunters he thought they would find a few wolves and bears without difficulty, and he graphically related some of his own hunting experiences. Then he again looked out at the foilage, and again earnestly gazed at his visitors. Then taking an immense quid of tobacco from his mouth and laying it away for future use, he related to them the astonishing adventures of his daughter, Mahitabel, with a den of wolves and bears, the last summer.

This was the story: One day that summer, Mahitabel, a healthy, strapping lass, as resolute and powerful as an ox, was out in the field planting corn. She heard a noise in the house, and she went to see what was the matter. There she found six wolves and four bears, and quite a large attendance of cubs, all eating out of the swill barrel. With a yell which would have frightened a Comanche, she seized the family musket and turned to meet the foe. But the menagerie had fled. Sniffing danger at the approach of such an amazon (she weighed 250 pounds, her father offered to "give his bond and affidavy to,") the bears and wolves and their respective families of whelps and cubs, had made a sudden rush for timber.

Mahitabel, pursued. She jumped the barnyard fence as the bears and wolves went through the hog yard. In the meadow beyond, the long grass so tangled her up that the fleeing drove were enabled to gain on her for a time. Still undaunted, she continued to pursue with energy, and though the fugitives disappeared from her sight in the thick underbrush, she fortunately by means of the heavy fall of snow, was enabled to track them, and for the same reason, while they waded and wallowed in it with difficulty, she was enabled to utilize her number fourteen rubber boots as snow shoes, and skim along quite rapidly. Thus coasting on the

top of the hard crust, and using her feet with the agility of a clog dancer, she soon began to overhaul them again.

At last she overtook them. It was in a deep and lonely dell where the flowers bloomed in the noontide effulgence, where humming birds sipped and sang and blue bottle flies and big beetles buzzed. There, where all nature wore a quiet and peaceful garb, and naught was heard save the soft song of the tree frog, the low rustle of the leaves and the gentle voice of the modest mosquito, the fugitive bears and wolves with their fleeing progeny, had made their stand. Mahitabel approached gallantly, and leveling her musket, blazed away. One bear fell. The other bears and all the wolves, excepting one, fled. They ran up a tall pine stub, and entering a great hole in the top, disappeared from view.

But the wolf that did not flee turned upon Mahitabel and tackled her. Then she also gathered up her feet for flight. She climbed an umbrageous beach which considerate providence had kindly planted near by. The pursuing wolf closely followed after, and like her, shinned his way up the tree. In the meantime Mahitabel had climbed to the top-most branches, where, as she could go no farther, she calmly awaited her approaching enemy. The wolf carefully picked his way up the tree until he came within about four feet of her. Then, as he stopped to reconnoitre, our heroine reached over and took him by the tail and turned him around, and he saw himself suddenly looking down the tree and growling in great wrath. But this relief from danger was momentary. The wolf, madder than ever, turned back again as soon as she let go her hold, and again looked at her and attempted to glare her out of countenance. Then once more she reached over him and grabbed him by the tail and switched him around. Whereupon, dismayed and overawed the wolf jumped for a neighboring tree.

As he jumped, she seized his tail in her teeth and with a large sized darning needle in each hand she spurred the wolf behind. She also unlimbered her feet with the force of two pile drivers and kicked him fearfully and wonderfully. The wolf reached the next tree and hung on. She also hung on. The wolf now greatly frightened ran to the top, she still hanging to him and spurring and kicking him as before. Then the wolf jumped to the next tree top and so on from

tree top to tree top, she still hanging on and looking like a cloud disturbing Venus, as she floated high aloft, spurring, kicking and whooping through the atmosphere. At last they reached the hollow pine stub where the other bears and wolves had taken refuge. Then the immense beast broke loose from the clutches of our heroine and entering the hole, joined his brother wolves and bears.

Mahitabel, left master of the situation, like a good general immediately mounted guard over the whole outfit, and there, undismayed by the growling and grumbling of the imprisoned beasts beneath her, she remained until an hour later when her brother came within hail. Being made acquainted with the situation, he went and brought the oxen and hitching them to the pine stub, tipped it over and caught the entire band of wild beasts in the hen house which he had brought down for that purpose on the stone boat.

In proof of this story the old frontiersman showed the hunters the hen house where the bears and wolves had been kept, and also pointed out the pine stub and the hole. He would in farther proof, have shown them the valient Mahitabel, but he said she was then some distance away in the timber cutting cord wood. On seeing such incontestable proof of the presence of wild and savage beasts, the hunters concluded, especially as it was near night, to go home and get more ammunition and finish their hunt another day. As they left, the old frontiersman again gazed long at them and at the bright green foliage which soon hid them from his view.

## REMINISCENCES, AND HOW WE ONCE RAN FOR OFFICE.

The life of a country editor, for nearly twenty-five years at the same old stand, publishing the same old newspaper he then commenced, and year in and year out diligently wielding the same old editorial shears and paste brush, is none too exuberant even under the most favorable conditions, yet it sometimes has a few gleams of excitement in it. As he treads and retreads his accustomed round, diligently threshing out disquisitions on every subject from the rise of parties to the price of corn, from "the tariff" down to self congratulatory blowouts over "our immense circulation" and from thence to a notice of Neighbor Jones' patch of big watermelons, "one of which is on our table," his life, we say, though it would appear to be a perpetual round of monotony, is not altogether so. Thus, when, as occasionally happens, insatiate creditors on the one hand and delinquent subscribers on the other, conspire to locate him on the ground said to be "between the devil and deep sea," he forgets the sameness of his existence in solving the interesting problem of ways and means how he is to rescue himself from the threatening perils unscathed. Or when, in his efforts to serve to his constituents their weekly allowance of literary fodder, he unexpectedly has the good fortune to nail some incident, legend or adventure of more than ordinary interest, he forgets all else in the joy of rescuing the nugget from its sand—perhaps he publishes it—at all events he clothes it as gorgeously as imagination will permit, and, for future use, carefully lays it on the shelf, where his pipes, unpaid bills and other valuables are kept. In the course of twenty years one may harvest quite a large number of these nuggets, some of which are worth saving, while others will be found glittering, but useless pyrites. The facts, fancies, legends and incidents in part second of this book, were collected in the manner above hinted, and the publication of them is for the purpose of keeping alive the memory of pioneer days.



In those old days, twenty-five years ago, there was little local news outside the ordinary routine of life. Twice a week, when the mail arrived from Sioux City, (we had no railroad then), we learned of what was doing in the outside world, its excitements, wars, politics, crimes and accidents—but here at home there was little to stir the blood, and aside from politics, little to excite attention. Thus in a civil, peaceable, law abiding way the people on this frontier drifted along, improving their farms, building houses, and, whether farmers, merchants or mechanics, gradually enlarging the business they were in and slowly but surely becoming more independent and comfortable.

Speaking of politics, we will say that we never had anything to do with it except once, and the history of that one time we will add here, in order to suitably lengthen out this sketch to proper proportions. Many have heard the story before but they will perhaps like to hear it again.

About twenty years ago we had the ambition to become county judge. Why we had such a wish the Lord only knows. Perhaps we caught it as one catches the measles or whooping cough. At all events we had it, mildly at first and increasing in violence as time went on. The office of county judge was not one of great wealth and in those days the incumbent had little to do. But what the office lacked in business or fees, it made up in dignity. The ponderous, heavy sounding and big bodied name of "judge" was not to be scornfully sneezed at. And it would be a great honor in after years, to be able to swell up one's diaphragm and speak of the time when "we were on the bench," etc. Consequently we proposed to fasten to the judgeship.

In pursuance of this project, we confidentially whispered to certain friends that certain other of our friends had whispered the idea to us, and that while we didn't want the office, still, for the sake of harmony, we might possibly, though with great reluctance, be prevailed upon to run, if the party desired it. Then our friends went around and told how, without our wishes and in a great measure unbeknown to us, there seemed to be a spontaneous uprising of the bone and sinew of the county, in order to give us that tremendous office and its still more tremendous title.

It was no doubt the reluctance on our part to accept this great office, that induced sixteen of the twenty-eight delegates to come and see us, each one separately and privately before the convention came off, and earnestly insist on our accepting the distinguished trust. Our continued labors for the party, they said, were duly remembered. Our lack of legal knowledge, we were sympathizingly informed, did not disqualify us, as in that office no such knowledge was necessary. Each of the sixteen went away bathed in tears of joy, for we consented to run.

We were unable to attend the convention, but afterwards heard that when it came off we did not quite get sixteen out of the twenty-eight votes. In fact, when the votes were counted, we seemed even to fall somewhat short of a majority. Perhaps you will be surprised, but we did not get twelve votes out of the twenty-eight. If the truth must be told we couldn't boast of nine votes. If we had had eight votes we should have been better off than we were. We are compelled to remark that had we received seven votes, we should have been much encouraged, for seven is a lucky number. But we did not get seven, nor indeed six votes. It is a great cross to admit it, but we lacked some of getting five votes. We should have been thankful if we had had three votes, as that is said to be a rising number. We certainly ought to have received two votes, and we probably should if some one had joined with the lone and lonesome delegate who voted for us.

Yes, we had one vote.

It has always been a source of gratification to reflect that when that vote was put in there was no convulsion of nature, no stopping the earth in its motion, nor even an earthquake. On the contrary, everything continued the same as before. The sad and solitary vote was dropped so meekly and unobtrusively into the hat that no one would have noticed anything out of the ordinary course of events, unless, perhaps, that the delegate appeared to be a little ashamed of himself.

After the convention, the sixteen delegates came one after another and made us a visit of condolence. Each with sorrow depicted on his countenance expressed in moving accents his deep regret, and stated how hard he had labored.

It appeared that each of the sixteen was the identical one who had voted for us. Such sympathy, so reliable and truthful, greatly calmed and encouraged us, and since then we always believe every word a delegate tells us. We afterwards learned, however, that the unfortunate man who did give us that one vote was not one of our friendly band of sixteen, but he voted for us because he knew us less than he did the other candidates.

## A BULL FIGHT.

In Spain, bull fights are very frequent. In this country, however, they are not so common, yet they sometimes occur. Josh, Bennett was the fortunate owner of a very fine, thoroughbred bull. A bull of powerful neck and wonderful horns and whose geneology could if necessary be traced back in a direct line to the ancient and aristocratic family of the bulls of Bashan. Picketed to a stake back of Josh's barn, his (the bull's) melodious voice was often heard in tones defiant, inviting other bulls, (of which this country had the pleasure of having several roaming around,) to approach and hold a conference. Early one Saturday morning, while the aforesaid Taurus was trying the strength of a 100-foot picket rope—trying also occasionally the strength of his lungs, a distant sound like the roar of approaching thunder was heard coming over the bluff. A cloud of dust first was seen, which moving down the hill side like a small tornado, revealed within it the contorting and cavorting form of another bovine—a bull, black as ink—who pranced upon the scene with head down and tail up, with flaming eyes and furious horns. As he thus in full fighting trim appeared Josh's bull, eagerly smelling the impending conflict, hastened to meet him, Josh having at the first note of war untied the rope so that no undue advantage could be taken. Thus advancing, they paused a moment when at a little distance apart, each to more closely view his antagonist, to paw the ground, and to pipe out the stirring note of battle. In the meanwhile the spectators speedily scaled the neighboring fences for safe keeping. Then with a preliminary roar the Taurian gladiators rushed upon each other. They speared in with their horns and tried to exalt each other thereon, they butted with their heads, they tore up the ground, they lashed their sides with their tails; each tried to dislocate the others neck, to cut his sides open, to break his back, both at the same time shooting off their mouths in voices of blood and

fury. Thus they fought. With amazing celerity they twisted and flounced around each other, goring and goading, supple as eels and with the fury of tigers, while the air resounded with the din, and the earth trembled as though a whole drove of antediluvian monsters had come again.

Being of about the same size, and both of them large and in perfect fighting trim—for some time it was hard to tell upon whose banner victory would perch. At first it was thought that the black bull would get away with the other. For a few of the first rounds he seemed to butt and gore with such remarkable ability and science that it looked as though he would soon be master of the situation. But finally Josh's bull turned upon his adversary with a desperation which regained in a twinkling all the ground he had lost in the fight theretofore. The battle raged until the antagonists, covered with wounds and bathed in blood and foam, were nearly exhausted. Then the black bull, which had been losing ground for some time, gave a parting roar, and turning, fled, and the other was too nearly played out to follow far. Then he was tied up again, and peace once more spread its white wings over the scene.

### IRREPRESSIBLE CONFLICT CONCERNING A HOG TROUGH.

As people of peace, this country used to have few quarrels and fights, and when one came off it was remembered. I never, for twenty years after coming here, saw but one real hard fought battle, and that I will now describe.

One day I had a trip to St. Helena in Cedar county, and on the route I came, not far from the county line, to a small but romantic valley which, embowered among the hills, presented a beautiful and attractive landscape. A silvery stream, over which was thrown a rustic bridge, sped merrily along, and on either side were fine farms with highly cultivated fields. A more peaceful, pleasant spot one could hardly find, and it would be difficult to believe that in so charming an Arcadian retreat, had been heard the shouts of combatants and the crash of war. Yet such, I regret to say, was the case.

Near the stream just mentioned was the farm of a man whom I will call Smith, (that not being his right name) and his house, but a short distance from the bridge, was tastefully situated amid trees and vines. With old man Smith and his wife lived two slab-sided, strapping sons and their wives, all of whom, generally peaceable and sluggish, were at the time I came to the bridge in question, engaged in warlike demonstrations of no make believe variety. As they occupied the bridge, I could not pass over, and hence had to stop and see the scrimmage.

The names of the two sons were Joe and Jim, and from what I could learn as to the cause of the row, it appeared that they had had certain differences of opinion, whereby lengthy and earnest discussions and exhaustive arguments ensued, concerning their respective rights and duties in regard to the cleaning out of a certain hog trough then and there being. Joe insisted that Jim should cleanse and scrape the said trough, whereas Jim maintained with equal force of

words and power of logic that it was Joe's business and not "his'n." As neither could convince the other, there was but one way left, and that was a resort to arms. Whereupon they rushed to the shock caparisoned and panoplied in this wise.—Joe grappled in his left hand an old breech burnt revolver, the which, as it was not loaded excepting with the accumulated rust of the past five years, was not as dangerous a weapon as would appear at first glance. In his right hand he carried a long stake, plucked from a convenient sled. To oppose this wrathful attack, Jim grabbed a churn having a few gallons of buttermilk in it, and desiring to open the battle by an artillery duel, discharged the contents at long range upon the advancing foe. Then, while his enemy was demoralized by the deluge of sour milk, Jim picked up a "swingletree," and fearlessly faced the cavernous mouth of the revolver, and, regardless of the sled stake, rushed upon Joe and knocked his two eyes into one,—made more room in his mouth by taking therefrom four teeth, and plastered his upper lip like a poultice of apple butter all over his face.

But this little episode did not check the undaunted soul of the warlike Joe. With his sled stake he ironed down Jim's nose until it resembled a pound of suitably hammered beef steak, one ear hung down like a broken sunflower, and a resounding pelt on his frontal bone caused him to see stars, planets, comets and suns without number.

But now Jim unlimbered again and let fly with his swingletree and nicely skinned from his antagonist's scone a strip of scalp long enough for a halter strap, split his nostrils apart until they looked in two different directions like the protecting guns of an assaulted fortification, and with a back action upward movement stroke, knocked his chin into his nose, thereby transforming his frontispiece into a beak.

And now, the battle becoming hot, the wives of the combatants gallantly moved to the conflict and reinforced, one on each side. And old man Smith and his wife also rushed down to the bridge where the fight was coming off, and tried to quell the tumult, but not being successful, finally joined in, one favoring Joe and the other Jim.

Then surged and resurged the battle on the bridge, and red ran the stream beneath it. Each combatant as he or

she pranced into the fight, had brought such weapons as were most convenient. On the left where the heaviest force seemed to be engaged, a shovel and a mop as opposing banners led the van, while through the air like chain shot or bursting bombs, came a skillet, an ash pan, two stove hooks and a pail of swill.

At the centre of the hard fought field, Joe wielded his sled stake again and let it fall like a trip hammer, cutting a hole in Jim's head, though not letting out any brains for obvious reasons. And in response Jim plied his swingletree bravely and vigorously, and with the determination never to yield, but to knock Joe out, gave vigorous and repeated blows upon the region of his pericardium and supergastriens. Also knocked off the single button holding up Joe's pants, which therefore becoming demoralized, Joe kicked them off as scornfully and disregardingly as the hero who burned his ships behind him. Then Joe lifted his sled stake and discharged a fearful blow at what was left of Jim's head. Had the blow hit square, the history of this fight would there and then have been concluded. But providence so ordained that as the blow descended, Jim, in trying to avoid it, fell into the creek, and Joe's tremendous exertions pitched him headlong after Jim. The creek, though not deep, was muddy, but regardless of the water and mud, they continued to fight, and grappled with one another and pounded and clawed until old man Smith, again assuming the position of mediator, waded out to them and with a fire shovel proceeded to administer judicious slaps here and there, and impartially and indiscriminately paddle the beligerant and slippery bodies which squirmed and flounced around in the mud like eels in a soap tub. Then he took a fence rail and pried them asunder and peace was once more proclaimed. Then the sole spectator of the scene, drove on. How they finally decided the question of cleaning the hog trough we never heard.



## A CONFIDENCE GAME TAKES PEOPLE IN.

"Gimme seventy-five cents for this dollar bill!" yelled a chap standing in a carriage on Mikesell's corner, one Saturday afternoon.

There was nothing in the appearance of the man to warrant the supposition that he was insane. On the contrary he looked about as sharp as they make 'em.

"Gimme a quarter for a half-dollar, ten cents for a quarter, who'll have 'em?" he vociferated, as the crowd gathered around.

Of course such an opportunity for speculation was not to be passed by and while setting him down as an escaped lunatic, several bystanders snapped up his baits in a hurry.

"I tell ye, fellers," he cried, "I've got lots of money, and I'm tryin' ter get rid of it. I'm on the hunt of my dad's reputation that he lost up here ten years ago. None of ye hain't seen nothin' of it have ye? Who'll have ten cents jist to 'member me by?"

The crowd grew, and our lunatic drove a thriving business, occasionally varying the performance by scattering a little loose change on the ground, where the crowd nearly mashed each other's shins in picking it up.

"I tell ye I'm rich!" he shouted. "Our hull family's that way. I've got the nicest farm ye ever saw down in Iowa. 'Nuther man's farm lays right on top of it. Who wants this elegant quarter for only a dime?"

By this time the crowd numbered about a hundred, and then the sad-faced stranger began to come down to business.

He opened a valise of microscopic dimensions, and took out a case of Peter Funk jewelry. Picking out a common collar button, he expattered thus:

"Gentlemen, I am traveling agent for the Chicago jewelry firm of Clapp & Co. We have lately patented a new article of jewelry, which we are desirous of introducing into your town. Composed of equal parts brass, tin, copper and platinum, warranted good as gold, will not rust, discolor, rip,

tear, ravel or run down at the heel. I have here a few samples, which I wish some of you intelligent gentlemen to examine, so that next week when our selling agent arrives with a large stock, you may know what quality of goods he has. But to guard myself against loss, while you are examining the button, please hand up ten cents, its value, which shall be returned to you when you have done."

Quite a number of verdants complied with his request. Their money was returned to them after the examination and he also generously allowed them to keep the button. This performance was gone through with on several different articles and the rush became great, for he generally returned more money than had been given him.

He at last brought out a case of the meanest of mean brass rings for which he asked a dollar as security. The careful observer might have observed that this time he didn't promise to return the money worth a cent. People bit as usual, however. Then he brought out some more rings for which he asked two dollars security. Meanwhile he hadn't returned the one dollar men's seeds. But these innocents waited patiently. He exhorted the crowd to come up and invest in the \$2 rings. "Just to make the \$1 men sick," said he. Quite a number again bit, some of the \$1 men among the number.

He now had in his hands some \$20 or \$25. And now this peculiar acting agent began to act still more peculiar.

Like Elisha, he "riz right up" in his carriage and politely informed the crowd that he had given them a good article of experience at a nominal price, and they should be satisfied.

"This money," said he, "I might return to you; and, agin, I moughtn't. I might donate it to the Young Men's Christian association; but I won't. I might give it to the churches; but it wouldn't do to divide such a small amount of money between so many churches. I might jam it down my jeans; and I'll be derved if I don't think I will!" And before the astonished victims could get this meaning through their hair, his buggy wheels had disappeared around the corner. They never saw him nor the money again. It was a good lesson, showing as it did, the "ways that are dark and the tricks that are vain."

## PROF. PERRIGOUÉ'S FIGHT WITH FIRE.

The passengers on the train one evening, saw on the hills and the ravines northeast of Ponca, a tremendous fire. Little did they imagine that in the centre of that magnificent display of flame a cruel scene was being enacted.

Professor Perrigoué, (well known to science as the discoverer of Dixon County's subterranean wonders), built, a few weeks before in one of the ravines, a building designed for an observatory, but which lately he had been utilizing as a lime kiln. On the evening in question, he was attending to his kiln and stirring up the fire with as much diligence as he had often previously exercised in more scientific enterprises. Thus, earnest and busy, he did not for some time see two long lines of fire approaching him, the one from the west and the other from the east. The roaring of the rapidly advancing fires finally aroused him from the contemplation of his labors. The sight which greeted him was an appalling one. He saw himself in a narrow lane between parallel walls of fire. Escape seemed impossible. Yet, undismayed by the thought that he would soon be broiled alive, he surveyed his situation with the intrepid calmness of an old Indian fighter on the plains of Montana. A short distance away the professor saw a tall cottonwood tree. In a moment he reached and climbed it. Yet, swift as were his motions, they were none too soon for safety, for as he climbed the angry fires swept under him and long fingers of flame reached up and tickled his lower limbs and scorched his coat tails. He climbed and climbed and scaled the tree to its highest branches. He saw that he was not alone in seeking that place of refuge. Driven forward by the fire and now surrounded by it, several snakes and animals attempted to escape by climbing the tree. Among those who came up were four rattlesnakes, which, in the presence of common danger, offered at first no violence to the professor nor to the dozen squirrels, the two wild cats, the four coons, and

finally the five skunks that, hastening up the tree, had perched upon its branches. The terrible heat below had indeed tenanted the tree with a wonderful variety of inhabitants.

The raging fire and the clouds of smoke at last awakened the anger of the professor's neighbors. The rattlesnakes partly unwinding from the branches to which they cling, struck at him with fury. The wild cats arched their backs and spit at him. Even the peaceable coons and squirrels showed their teeth and extended their claws toward him.

And now a new danger beset him. The tree itself took fire and its trunk dead and dry, burned with frightful violence, and soon burning off at its base, tottered and was about to fall and hurl the professor and his companions into the lake of fire below. At this supreme moment and in this fervid heat, the discomfort of his unhappy situation was greatly increased by the five skunks, which, located in different parts of the tree and hitherto quiet and peaceable, now seemed to regard him as the author of all their trouble.

The tree commenced to fall. Was there no hope? Alas! no. Without a special interposition of Providence how was it possible for the professor to escape. The fire below and for half a mile on every side was ten feet deep.

The tree continued to fall. We ask our readers what could the tortured denizens of that tree do under such circumstances. How could the professor get away unless he had wings. But he neither had wings nor time to sprout any. Could he get off on his ear or could he etherialize himself and float safely away on a cloud of smoke? Assuredly not.

In the meantime the tree continued to fall. Some there are who might possibly contrive some plan whereby the professor could find a place of safety. If so, they can do more than we can.

As we have before remarked, the tree, remorseless and relentless, continued to fall.

Well, let it fall.

## BURGLARS IN TOWN.

Before the railroad struck this country, no such person as a burglar was ever known to visit it. Whether the people were too poor to be robbed or whether a lack of the necessary swift transportation to and from, caused the burglar fraternity to give Dixon county the go by, cannot be said. It may be that the way with which the people dished out the law to Miller the murderer of Dum, may have made thieves a little skittish about coming here to do professional work. At all events they stayed away, and people scarcely ever thought of them.

When robbers raid a town, and break into houses, and slam around and carry off goods, with terror going before them and leaving destitution in their footsteps, then it is that the hearts of the stoutest are tried. Ponca had hoped to avoid such an ordeal as this, and although near by, at Sioux City, burglars had often tried their hands and got away with considerable swag, yet Ponca escaped until one night when certain events transpired, a history of which we will relate.

In the northwestern part of town resided a family named Rooks. On the evening in question, Mr. Rooks himself was away from home, and there was no man about the house except his son, a youth of about twenty-two summers. As the shades of evening crept down, and weird and ghostly shadows and silence fell upon the landscape, the family heard what was supposed to be a light footstep in the upper story of their house. They had been away during the day, and this fact together with the fact that a small sum of money was deposited up stairs, impressed young Mr. Rooks with the certainty that robbers, bold, insatiate and remorseless, had invaded the peaceful precincts of his home and were now laying in wait and would when night had farther advanced and sleep had wrapped up the household, issue forth in their furious, raw-head and bloody bones manner,

and murder him and steal the money. Consequently the young man immediately took measures for offense and defense. Grasping a formidable butcher knife he flung open the front door and stationed himself therein, having first opened the front gate, thus wisely remembering that one of the duties of a sagacious general before commencing battle, is to provide avenues of safe retreat in case such retreat should become necessary. Having thus formed his line of battle in the doorway, he deemed it expedient to send for reinforcements before opening the contest. He therefore sent his brother, a lad of six years, after Rev. Mr. Smith, who boarded there but was now down town.

Accordingly the lad came down on a run, and hunting up Mr. Smith, told him that robbers had broken into the house, and Mr. Smith ran back with him. On their way they overtook W. Clark, Jr., and impressed him into the service, and all soon arrived at the scene of danger. Here they found Rooks still intrepidly holding the post in the doorway, and in a dauntless manner, though with trembling legs, preparing for the onslaught. On casting about, it was seen that the only weapon of war the whole array had, was the butcher knife. The little brother was therefore sent to a neighbor's for arms, and he soon returned bringing a revolver. It was an ancient firearm, and might possibly have been young at the siege of Troy. Yet in the darkness its slight defects were not visible, and, as will be seen in the sequel, it did just as good execution as a Winchester rifle.

The troops and arms all being provided, Captain Rooks before leading them to the field of battle, took the pistol, and addressing his men, pointed out the dangers to be undergone, and directed Mr. Smith, as second in command, to take charge of the butcher knife, which however he declined in favor of Clark. The captain then said that as soon as they met the horde of armed and desperate robbers up stairs, he would probably be shot, and when that happened he wished Mr. Smith to take the revolver and finish the battle.

The force having formed for the purpose of advancing up stairs, the captain lifted his voice and in words trembling with brave emotion, warned the robbers that they were all now about to be killed. And rattling his revolver he resolutely pushed forward legs which seemed to want to go

another way. Then came Clark with the butcher knife, with which he occasionally prodded his leader in the back when he leaned or wobbled. The next should have been Rev. Smith, but alas, at this critical period he hauled off and retreated from the field. Thus the army was depleted one-third, without firing a gun. Notwithstanding this discouraging circumstance, the remaining two continued their march up stairs, and after some time, being often required to pause to reform the line and brace up, they arrived at the top.

And now occurred a series of military movements worthy of Marshal Turenne. They hammered the walls and floor and made a noise as though a whole regiment was at their backs, then they partly opened the door, peeked in and jumped nimbly aside. The robbers within never let on, never said a word nor made a sign of their presence. Then the captain ordered Clark to deploy in and reconnoitre, while he would hold the post at the door. Mr. Clark accordingly marched in and explored the mysteries of the room. The robbers still making no resistance, the captain moved to Clark's assistance, and together they examined the premises.

They stripped off the bed-clothes from the bed, slung aside the ticks of feathers and straw, and with the bed-slats punched and jammed into every nook and cranny where a robber might be hid. Only once when punching and prodding under a bureau did they think they had caught him. Then forth leaped the ready revolver in the captain's strong right hand, and he prepared to shoot at once. Things were evidently approaching a crisis. Fortunately at this juncture, it was discovered that what had been supposed to be a robber was a bag of old clothes. In fact, no robber was found, nor anything with the disposition of one, except a mouse which crept timidly along the wall, to see what all the uproar was about.

Having thus defended the domicile, the captain confidently remarked as to what he would have done had he seen the robbers. Then they went down stairs, and the conflict ended.

## AN INDIAN DUEL.

One hot summer's day, ten or fifteen years ago, a party of four young Indians passed through town going northwest. A few miles out they stopped and arrayed themselves in war costume and put on ominous black and red paint, thus indicating that they were on a mission not wholly peaceful. The secret of the matter was, two of the Indians were going out to fight a duel. They were two young Santee Sioux, named respectively Slit Lip Bob and Sam Squire. They had been down to the Omaha reservation on a visit and while there had both fallen in love with an Indian squaw named Sall Molly, the beautiful daughter of old Billy Bumbottle, one of the chiefs of the tribe. The two Indian beaux, Bob and Sam, went dead in love with the alluring Sall, and, according to Indian custom, each tried to buy her of her affectionate parent. His price was twenty-four ponies, which was not high, considering that she was a stout, strapping squaw, good tempered, and capable of hoeing corn and doing housework, in all of which accomplishments she was well versed, having already had much experience. Consequently both the beaux were willing to pay the twenty-four ponies, and the question then naturally came up as to which one it should be. The case was referred to Sall herself, but she could not fully decide, as she liked them both almost equally well. They were indeed both fine Indians, and in many respects well matched. If there was any advantage at all it was probably in favor of Sam, who was younger than the other and had already only two wives, whereas Bob was the possessor of four helpmeets. But Sall could not decide which she would make happy, and her two swains agreed to settle the matter by fighting.

So they started out to find a suitable place for the battle, bringing with them two Indian friends to act as umpires and bottle holders, and passed through town as before related.

After donning their war paint they went up to a secluded spot in the Lime creek hills, and then laying aside all weap-



ons excepting two stone headed war clubs, they mounted their ponies and tackled one another with great fury. After circling and whooping around as a sort of preliminary exercise, the combatants came to close quarters, when Bob delivered a fearful blow with his club at Sam, who slipped to one side and the blow fell on the head of his pony and made him feel very demure for awhile. Then Sam got in a blow which lamed his opponent's leg severely. They then fell to and whacked and banged away at each other, but without much effect till finally from exhaustion both dismounted and sat down on the grass and glared at each other in silence. And now the spirit of peace, compromise and conciliation stole over them, and Bob proposed if Sam would give him five ponies, a revolver and two knives, that he would throw up the sponge and let his rival have the girl without further trouble. Sam joyfully agreed to this, and then washing off their paint and dirt, they and their two friends returned back to the agency, and the next day the wedding took place. Bob, conciliated by his five ponies, his revolver and two knives, rejoiced in happiness second only to that of the bride and groom.

If we had a novelist's pen, we should stretch this romantic tale of Indian life into a novel of six books. The incidents were related to us by one of the Indians who attended the fight and are substantially correct, excepting the names of some of them, which, as our memory is not good in such matters, we may have miscalled.

## THE GENERAL'S JOLLIFICATION MEETING.

"Uncle Jimmy" Patton, who was a settler on the "Missouri bottom" near Ponca in '65, was a genial old soul and a great singer. He was also sometimes given to thirst and "fire water," at which times his usual peaceful disposition was overpowered by largely developed war-like propensities. On such occasions he would march upon the town, heralding his advance by a voice like the first blast of an approaching storm. It was probably his tremendous roar, like that of a park of artillery which gave him the title of "general," for that was always his title when angry and drunk, though plain "Uncle Jimmy" when good natured and sober.

One evening the voice of the "general" was heard in the distance and in a short time, with blood at fever heat, he appeared in person upon the streets and furnished to his fellow citizens an entertainment fully in keeping with what might have been expected from one of his versatility of genius as a singer and outdoor orator.

Soon after his arrival the general turned himself loose and organized the town into a concert hall, and gave his audience many choice songs. In executing his musical selections, he by turns appeared witty, grave, gay, sad, mad and pugnacious. At one time he laughed, and again, his soul was possessed by inexpressible grief, and he wept. He sang many hymns with great fervor and in a voice that could be heard two miles away. It is said that the wild beasts on the neighboring hills fled that night, thinking they heard the roar of some destroying enemy. At the first blast of that awful voice, all the dogs in town crawled under barns and groaned and howled. Then, also, rose up every man and lit his lantern and went forth to see if the unearthly explosion of sounds which smote his ears, were from the gasping agonies of dying cows and calves.

Little thinking of the amazing uproar and excitement he was arousing in this part of the country, the general diligently continued his programme. He sang "When I Can Read My Title Clear" with such knock-down force that it shook windows and dashed out glass as though a cannon had been fired under them. He executed "Sweet Bye and Bye" with terrific violence, and poured out his soul in "Greenland's Icy Mountains" in a manner suggestive of a heavy storm at sea. Then with the roar of a famished cannibal he hurled himself upon Poet-Laureate Rockwell's latest psalm, and rent it limb from limb. So shocking was the onslaught, that of those who heard it, many thought the crack of doom was at hand or that the chief boss of Hades had broken loose.

Varying his strains from solemn to gay, he now like an avalanche thrashed his way into "Mulligan's Guards," whereupon all the cats in town scooted for the housetops and caterwauled in unison. The general then assaulted and stormed the symphony entitled "Finnigan's Wake," and then with the graceful poise of a five gallon jug, he gnashed his jaws upon "Johnny Fill Up the Bowl." It is reported that on account of this song, several people went deaf, and others had their hair whitened before morning. Then he concentrated his bass, treble and baritone, and all his different hurricanes of melody, into one solid chain-shot of electrical, blasting energy, and hooted forth "We Shall Gather at the River." He closed his singing by hammering out the doxology, which he discharged into the town like a thunderbolt, and led people to believe that a comet or an anvil chorus had struck the place.

He then indulged in several ear-splitting, earth-quaking Indian war whoops. A small party of Indians camped on the summit, five miles away, hastily struck their tents and mounting their ponies broke for the woods.

After these musical exercises, the general danced clog dances, Virginia break-downs and Highland flings—the which, as he delivered his hoofs upon the sidewalk, sounded like a dray of bricks suddenly unloaded and falling from a great height. He wound up by taking off his coat and inviting those who desired it, to stand forth and be whipped. As no one responded to the invitation he put on

his coat again and with the appearance of one who had done his duty and could do no more for the gratification of his friends, took up his homeward march.

The above, a sample of what occurred occasionally for several years, shows that though we had no regular theatres in early times, we had other entertainments equally as good.





## INDEX.

The names and brief notices of the pioneers from the first settlement in May, 1856, to the organization of the county and its first election in December, 1858, will be found on pages 16 to 23, inclusive. The names of the most prominent of those pioneers are also in this index.

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